



Another Milestone for the Mainstreaming of Anti-Semitism: The New America Foundation and Max Blumenthal's Goliath

The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law

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Abstract

This paper argues that, by providing a platform to Max Blumenthal for the promotion of his book *Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel*, the New America Foundation (NAF) bestowed legitimacy on a book that is, in effect, antisemitic because its author intended to convince readers that Israel should be equated with Nazi Germany. It will be shown that during the NAF event, Blumenthal was allowed to justify his comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany without being challenged. Furthermore, it will be documented that when the event was held, the NAF already knew, or could have known, that the book had been eagerly embraced by notorious antisemites and that it primarily appealed to activists campaigning for the delegitimization and elimination of Israel as a Jewish state. It will also be shown that Blumenthal expected – and indeed received – mainstream recognition in the aftermath of the NAF event, including an endorsement by a NAF board member. At the same time, however, there were additional endorsements for his book that illustrate its appeal to groups and individuals opposing Israel's existence as a Jewish state and espousing antisemitic views. As will be documented, Blumenthal himself endorsed reviews that praised his book for making the case that equating Israel and Nazi Germany is entirely justified.

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Note: All links provided in the references have been accessed between December 25, 2013, and January 18, 2014.

About the author

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Introduction

The New America Foundation (NAF) is an influential think tank in Washington, D.C. that describes itself as a “nonpartisan public policy institute.” Despite this official pledge of nonpartisanship, the NAF is widely regarded as a leading liberal Democratic institution, and it is currently headed by Anne-Marie Slaughter, a former Obama-administration official who served from 2009–2011 as the State Department’s director of Policy Planning. The NAF board includes many well-known and well-connected personalities, and the organization has received major funding (i.e. 1 million \$ or more) from prestigious donors like the Ford Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the US Department of State.¹

Every year, the NAF hosts more than 150 events on topical issues related to NAF programs. These events also include presentations on newly published books, and it should go without saying that the authors of these books usually have impressive professional credentials and solid expertise in their fields. However, on December 4, 2013, the NAF hosted an event for which neither the author nor the book seemed qualified, particularly in view of the fact that the event was part of the NAF’s National Security Program.² Already the title of the book that was to be presented – *Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel* – indicated that this was not a sober analysis of the complex challenges faced by a longtime US ally, and the book’s author, Max Blumenthal, clearly had no credentials or expertise related in any way to US national security questions.³ To be sure, Blumenthal had made a name for himself with a previous book on the Republican Party that was advertised as “a bestiary of dysfunction, scandal and sordidness [sic] from the dark heart of the forces that now have a leash on the party.” According to the top endorsement displayed on Blumenthal’s own website, the book explores “the dank forests of American Christianity,” and the same endorsement concludes that “Republican Gomorrah is an irresistible [sic] combination of anthropology and psychopathology that exerts the queasy fascination of (let’s face it) something very like pornography.”⁴ Blumenthal was apparently eager to produce a sequel, declaring in

¹ Details available at the NAF website: <http://www.newamerica.net/about>

² For NAF events, see: Event Archives: 2013, at: <http://www.newamerica.net/events/archives/2013>. A description of the NAF’s National Security Program is at: <http://security.newamerica.net/dashboard>; for National Security Program events, see: Archives: National Security Program Events, at: <http://security.newamerica.net/archives/events/1970>.

³ Max Blumenthal, *Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel*; Nation Books (October 1, 2013); 512 pages, at: <http://www.amazon.com/Goliath-Life-Loathing-Greater-Israel/dp/1568586345>

⁴ See Amazon advertisement for Max Blumenthal, *Republican Gomorrah: Inside the Movement that Shattered the Party*, at: <http://www.amazon.com/Republican-Gomorrah-Inside-Movement-Shattered/dp/B00381B782>; and Blumenthal’s own page for Republican Gomorrah, at: <http://maxblumenthal.com/buy-republican-gomorrah-inside-the-movement-that-shattered-the-party/>

the very first sentence of *Goliath*'s "Preface:" "In pursuing this reporting project, I have relied on the same journalistic methods that I employed in writing my last book."

However, judging from Blumenthal's own often repeated complaints, one has to conclude that the way he applied his "journalistic methods" to his new topic yielded results that were mainly appreciated by outlets such as *Mondoweiss* and the *Electronic Intifada*, which cater to activists devoted to promoting boycott campaigns against Israel and maligning the Jewish state as illegitimate and uniquely evil. When Blumenthal thanked these sites in the "Acknowledgements" at the end of *Goliath*, he emphasized that they "provided essential outlets for much of the reporting contained on these pages—material that less courageous publications have shied away from." It is noteworthy that Blumenthal acknowledges here that "much of the reporting" presented in *Goliath* was previously published, because the record he established with his writings on Israel during the roughly four years he worked on *Goliath* should arguably have alerted the NAF that this was clearly a book written for an audience eager to see Israel depicted in ways that would provide BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) activists with material that could be used to argue that the Jewish state was too evil to be allowed to continue existing.

Moreover, given the audience Blumenthal was usually addressing, it is easy to see why "less courageous publications" than *Mondoweiss* and the *Electronic Intifada* would not want to publish Blumenthal's work on Israel – indeed, it seems safe to conclude that it is for the very same reason that some of the material Blumenthal produced was praised on sites like the neo-Nazi Internet forum *Stormfront*.⁵ In October 2013, one *Stormfront* member posted an article about "Israel's New Racism" – a major topic in *Goliath* – including an embedded clip of what was described as a "must-see short documentary by David Sheen and Max Blumenthal [...] about the appalling treatment of African migrants in Israel."⁶

Another clip by Blumenthal was promoted by several *Stormfront* members, and its popularity was hardly surprising given the clip's title (which Blumenthal used again for a chapter in *Goliath*): "How to Kill

⁵ The Anti-Defamation League describes Stormfront as "the most popular Internet meeting place for anti-Semites, neo-Nazis, and other white supremacists," see: http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext_us/don-black/stormfront.html.

⁶ The article, entitled "Is it Really Israel's New Racism?," was written by the notorious antisemite Gilad Atzmon (for more on Atzmon see the section: How anti-Israel activists define antisemitism) and is cross-posted without attribution from another site, see: <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1001077/>. The supposedly "appalling treatment of African migrants in Israel" is a major topic in *Goliath* that will be discussed in detail later on; however, it should already be noted now that the very same ten-minute clip recommended here as a "must-see" was later also promoted by mainstream writers who defended Blumenthal after his NAF event, including NAF board member James Fallows; for more on this issue see this paper's section: Mainstream exposure for *Goliath* in the aftermath of the NAF event.



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Goyim and Influence People.”⁷ Shortly after the clip was first published in late August 2010, a *Stormfront* member linked to Blumenthal's original article and commented:⁸

“A mask has fallen here, and the horrible visage behind that mask even frightens this Jewish exposé, as it should any man of good and decency: [How to Kill Goyim and Influence People: Israeli Rabbis Defend Book's Shocking Religious Defense of Killing Non-Jews \(with Video\) | World | AlterNet](#)

Max Blumenthal has done a great service for all of humanity here, and we WNS [i.e. white nationalists], and the rest of the world, ought to be grateful to him.”

Yet another clip by Blumenthal, entitled “Feeling the Hate in Tel Aviv,” was posted by an enthusiastic *Stormfront* member in April 2012 with the comment: “Max Blumenthal is great (so not all Jews are assholes).”⁹

Blumenthal himself clearly liked this type of clips and posted a collection of them on his *YouTube* channel under the title: “Max Blumenthal's Feeling the Hate Extravaganza - Feel the hate in Israel,” and some of the material from these videos is also reflected in *Goliath*.¹⁰ Regarding the clip on Tel Aviv, Blumenthal explains on his *YouTube* channel that it is “the sequel to ‘Feeling the Hate in Jerusalem,’ the video banned by YouTube, Vimeo and the Huffington Post after topping 400,000 hits.”¹¹ This “banned” clip – which is also described in *Goliath*¹² – recorded some drunken young American Jews visiting Jerusalem in early June 2009; according to Blumenthal, they were “all eager to vent their visceral, even violent hatred of Barack Obama and his policies toward Israel.”¹³ The popular clip and the related

⁷ *Goliath*, chapter 57: How to Kill Goyim and Influence People, p.303 ff.

⁸ *Stormfront* member FriendofRPO, posted 09-01-2010 at: <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t738234/>; see also BoyHowdy "Friend of Stormfront" Sustaining Member, posted 05-07-2011, at: <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t799717/>. Cf. *Goliath*, chapter 57: How to Kill Goyim and Influence People, pp.303-312.

⁹ *Stormfront* member Gladiatrix, posted on 04-22-2012 (#34 in a thread entitled “President Of ‘Israel’ Says: The Germans Locked Jews In A Synagogue And Burned Them Alive), at: <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t882054-4/>.

¹⁰ Max Blumenthal's Feeling the Hate Extravaganza - Feel the hate in Israel, posted at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/mblumenthal/>; cf. *Goliath*, Part VII: Feeling the Hate, chapters 43-49, pp. 229-262.

¹¹ For the clip at Max Blumenthal's *YouTube* channel, see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ze5dbxPO8cU&feature=player_embedded

¹² See *Goliath*, chapter 45: Zion Square, pp. 237-244

¹³ Blumenthal's description of the banned clip is from: Adam Horowitz, Max Blumenthal: Feeling the Hate in Jerusalem on Eve of Obama's Cairo Address, June 5, 2009, at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2009/06/max-blumenthal-feeling-the-hate-in-jerusalem-on-eve-of-obamas-cairo-address.html>.



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commentary Blumenthal had posted on his own website also found favor at *Rense.com*, which according to the Anti-Defamation League often links “to some of the most virulent anti-Jewish writings on the Internet.” Under the title “Max Blumenthal - Feeling Jewish Hate,” the entry from Blumenthal’s website was cross-posted there together with some introductory comments expressing seething anger about supposed double-standards “driven by ADL & AIPAC” (i.e. the Anti-Defamation League and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee). There were also bitter complaints that “Americans are suffering and dying in the streets because the Israeli-American government is broken.” But according to the *Rense.com* post, Blumenthal’s video “tells us loudly and clearly what our hard-earned money is being used to pay for.”¹⁴ As it turns out, the angry writer at *Rense.com* understood Blumenthal’s purpose very well and accurately anticipated already in 2009 what Blumenthal would eventually write in the first paragraph of his preface to *Goliath*: “it is Americans’ tax dollars and political support that are crucial in sustaining the present state of affairs [in Israel]. I want to show what they are paying for.”

The fact that Blumenthal presented the clip recording the rants of drunken youngsters as revealing typical Jewish bigotry against Obama is also an excellent illustration of what Blumenthal likes to call his “journalistic methods.” As one commentator in the Israeli daily *Ha’aretz* dryly observed: “Talking to drunken American Jewish 19-year-olds to gauge Israeli opinion on Obama is like using far-right conservatives to measure American public opinion on gay marriage.”¹⁵ Yet, in a subsequent interview with *Ha’aretz*,¹⁶ Blumenthal insisted that the clip was somehow representative of Jewish bigotry against Obama, though he was also quoted as acknowledging: “I just record work and then I release it.” The *Ha’aretz* reporter added that Blumenthal was trying to explain “how the videos he [Blumenthal] makes differ greatly from the meticulous nature of traditional broadcast journalism.” Unsurprisingly, Blumenthal rejected accusations that his footage provided fuel for anti-Semitism; yet, the fact that his work on Israel garnered profuse praise and was cross-posted at sites like *Stormfront* and *Rense.com* clearly indicates that some of the material that he later recycled for *Goliath* appealed to antisemitic audiences.

¹⁴ Jim Kirwan, Max Blumenthal - Feeling Jewish Hate, June 7, 2009, at: <http://www.rense.com/general86/hate.htm>; on *Rense.com* see the ADL’s post: Rense Web Site Promotes Anti-Semitic View, March 17, 2009, at: <http://www.adl.org/combatting-hate/domestic-extremism-terrorism/c/rense-web-site-promotes.html>

¹⁵ Benjamin L. Hartman, Jews gone wild: Why camcorders and booze don't mix, June 11, 2009, at: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/opinion-jews-gone-wild-why-camcorders-and-booze-don-t-mix-1.277739>; for similar criticism of Blumenthal’s work from a staunchly left-wing perspective see also: Gershom Gorenberg, Racism, Amalek and Videotape, June 13th, 2009, at: <http://southjerusalem.com/2009/06/racism-amalek-and-videotape/>

¹⁶ Benjamin L. Hartman, Filmmaker behind ‘drunk Jews’ video denies fueling anti-Semitism, June 14, 2009, at: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/filmmaker-behind-drunk-jews-video-denies-fueling-anti-semitism-1.277896>



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In this context it is also important to note that Blumenthal's book reflects his "work" with the camera: like his short video clips that "differ greatly from the meticulous nature of traditional broadcast journalism" by providing only context-free snapshots of scenes that support his preconceived ideas, *Goliath's* roughly 400 pages of text consist of 73 chapters that provide similarly context-free snapshots showing Israel in a way that would appeal to the audience Blumenthal was writing for while he was working on the book – that is to say an audience of activists devoted to campaigning for the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state.

That this is a goal that Blumenthal indeed shares had become clear well before the NAF hosted him to promote his book in early December 2013. Already at the beginning of his book tour in mid-October, Blumenthal had spelled out his shocking vision for the fate of Israel's Jews after the forced demise of the Jewish state, and the barely concealed call for ethnic cleansing he issued on this occasion was reported by the *Forward's* J.J. Goldberg.¹⁷ More fundamentally, however, anyone familiar with Blumenthal's work published on sites like *Mondoweiss* and the *Electronic Intifada* – and certainly anyone who read *Goliath* – could have little doubt that it was Blumenthal's intention to make the case that the Jewish state was as evil as Nazi Germany, and that its continued existence was therefore unconscionable. There is no need to rely on critics pointing to chapter titles like "The Concentration Camp" or "The Night of Broken Glass," because *Goliath* is arguably a book that is condemned by those who praised it and whose praise Blumenthal embraced. While this crucially important point will be discussed in more detail later on, Blumenthal provided an excellent example of what he wanted readers to take away from his book when he recommended a "brief but thorough review of *Goliath*" to his more than 27,000 Twitter followers, explicitly thanking the blogger who had posted the review for the "praise."¹⁸ Here are the relevant quotes from this "brief but thorough review:"

"You'd think Jews, [...] of all people, would react viscerally [...] against the notion of their state would [sic] come to create their own Gestapo (Shin Bet), build concentration camp (Ketzlot, for African refugees), emphasize racial purity while demonizing miscegenation (rationalized as the 'demographic' problem, but more significantly given religious and racial expression in groups like *Lehava*), using the police state, not just against enemies, but to crush dissent and ghettos (the walls are sprouting up all over Palestinian towns in the West Bank and, of course, there's

¹⁷ J.J. Goldberg, Max Blumenthal's 'Goliath' Is Anti-Israel Book That Makes Even Anti-Zionists Blush, October 31, 2013, and *Forward* print issue November 08, 2013, at: <http://forward.com/articles/186557/max-blumenthals-goliath-is-anti-israel-book-that-m/?p=all>. The event Goldberg highlights is discussed in detail below, see "Criticism of *Goliath*."

¹⁸ @MaxBlumenthal 11:57 PM - 8 Jan 14, at: <https://twitter.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/421038034545827840>; @MaxBlumenthal 12:04 AM - 9 Jan 14, at: <https://twitter.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/421039671251329024>; Papicek, Review of *Goliath*, by Max Blumenthal, January 8, 2014, at: <http://www.procesverbal.info/pv/?p=3365>

always Gaza). Even Kristallnacht was recreated by what amounts to an officially sanctioned anti-immigrant pogrom in Tel Aviv, in May of 2012.

Yes, you'd be mistaken. Reading *Goliath*, the similarities between Nazi Germany and today's Israeli regime are impossible to avoid. [...]

As I read *Goliath*, one thought [...] kept cropping up throughout: Apart from the specific group, it's [sic] flag, and all the other trappings of a national mythos and its veneration, are the aims and methods of the 'pure' Zionist state so very different than those of the 'pure' Aryan one?"

It is often difficult to show antisemitic intent, but Blumenthal makes it easy by endorsing reviews that leave no doubt how he wanted his book to be understood. Inevitably, this means that Blumenthal and his admirers actually agree with his critics that *Goliath* presents Israel as an utterly evil state that can only be compared to Nazi Germany. Even though there is considerable controversy about the question when hostility to Israel should be defined as anti-Semitism, Blumenthal's single-minded effort in *Goliath* to portray Israel in an extremely biased way in order to promote comparisons to Nazi Germany that would justify political campaigns aimed at eliminating the Jewish state qualifies even under the most stringent criteria.¹⁹ However, as far as Blumenthal is concerned, there is nothing antisemitic about equating Israel and Nazi Germany. As will be discussed later on, Blumenthal not only inverts what he likes to call "the lessons of the Holocaust" by implying that they require the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state, but he apparently also subscribes to the utterly bizarre definition of anti-Semitism that is popular among anti-Israel activists who insist that Zionism is a form of racism and anti-Semitism.

¹⁹ For guidelines on how to define antisemitism see e.g.: Defining Anti-Semitism: Fact Sheet, Special Envoy To Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, June 8, 2010, at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/fs/2010/122352.htm>; see also the British Community Security Trust's (CST) Antisemitic Discourse Report 2012, at: <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Antisemitic%20Discourse%20Report%202012%20WEB.pdf>, in particular p.11 on "antisemitic 'Anti-Zionism;'" many of the examples discussed in this report can also be found in *Goliath*. The literature about the controversial question how to define the line between criticism of Israel, anti-Zionism and antisemitism is obviously too large to be cited here; for an introduction see e.g. Robert Wistrich, Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism, *Jewish Political Studies Review* 16:3-4 (Fall 2004), at: <http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-wistrich-f04.htm>. Also important in the context of this paper: Edward H. Kaplan, Charles A. Small, Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism in Europe, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, August 2006, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 548-561; Kenneth L. Marcus, The Second Mutation: Israel and Political Anti-Semitism, *In Focus*, Spring 2008, at: <http://www.brandeiscenter.com/images/uploads/articleuploads/mutation.pdf>. Irwin Cotler, Global Antisemitism: Assault on Human Rights, Working Paper, Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy, 2009, at: <http://isgap.org/working-paper-irwin-cotler/>. For a discussion that includes boycott campaigns see: David Hirsh, Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism - Cosmopolitan Reflections, Working Paper, Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy, 2007, at: <http://isgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ISGAP-Working-Papers-David-Hirsh.pdf>



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As will be further documented in this paper, there were plenty of warning signs that the NAF chose to overlook when it decided to promote a book that not only included material that was much appreciated at antisemitic sites like *Stormfront* and *Rense.com*, but that also recycled writings that Blumenthal had already published at sites like *Mondoweiss* and the *Electronic Intifada*, where contributors usually do their best to cater to an audience that relies on these sites to find validation for the view that the world's only Jewish state is one of the world's biggest problems. Yet, at the NAF event, Blumenthal was allowed to present his book without being challenged in any way. Moreover, by hosting Blumenthal at a NAF National Security Program event that was supposedly meant to discuss "what his findings mean for the potential of peace in one of the world's most contested regions," the NAF legitimized *Goliath* – a book that, according to the author himself, is meant to evoke and justify comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany – as a serious work that could provide worthwhile insights for peace in the Middle East.

Praise for *Goliath* from notorious antisemites and Israel-haters

Activists who oppose Israel's existence as a Jewish state responded with much enthusiasm when Max Blumenthal published his 500-page book depicting Israel as a monstrous, Nazi-like "Goliath" consumed by rampant racism, militarism, fascism and religious fundamentalism.

At *Mondoweiss*, a site that is devoted to maligning Israel and has often been accused of publishing antisemitic material, Blumenthal was already a long-time contributor, and since some of his posts there were recycled for *Goliath*, the site's readers certainly knew what to expect. Blumenthal's newly published book quickly became the focus of a series of enthusiastic blog posts, and towards the end of the year, when *Mondoweiss* began its annual fundraising drive, those donating \$60 or more qualified for a free copy of *Goliath*.²⁰ Similar support for Blumenthal's book was expressed at the Hamas-friendly

²⁰ For some examples of antisemitic material published by *Mondoweiss*, see: Petra Marquardt-Bigman, *Mondoweiss* on 'Court Jew' Elie Wiesel [updated], December 17, 2012, at: <http://warped-mirror.com/2012/12/17/mondoweiss-on-court-jew-elie-wiesel-updated/>. *Mondoweiss* posts on Blumenthal's "Goliath" are available at: <http://mondoweiss.net/?s=goliath>. Blumenthal's contributions to or cross-posts at the site are available at: <http://mondoweiss.net/author/maxblumenthal>; some of the posts include material that



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Electronic Intifada, where Blumenthal is also listed as a contributor. For its fundraising drive in December 2013, the site proudly highlighted a quote from *Goliath*, where Blumenthal expressed his appreciation that the *Electronic Intifada* had been among the sites that “provided essential outlets for much of the reporting contained on these pages – material that less courageous publications have shied away from.”²¹

Beyond *Mondoweiss* and the *Electronic Intifada*, admirers of Blumenthal's “reporting” included Gilad Atzmon, a jazz musician who, as Jeffrey Goldberg once put it succinctly, “has a side gig disseminating the wildest sort of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories [...] Holocaust denial and all sorts of grotesque, medieval anti-Jewish calumnies.”²² Writing at *Veterans Today* – a website that, according to the Anti-Defamation League, regularly features anti-Israel and Holocaust denial materials and offers a platform for the promotion of antisemitic conspiracy theories – Atzmon praised Blumenthal's *Goliath* as “a good read,” emphasizing in his conclusion:

“I really want Blumenthal's book to succeed and be read widely. Being a theoretician, I do not have the time for any kind of field work. I establish a conceptual and intellectual framework with the hope that some would [...] gather the necessary evidence to support my theses. Whether Blumenthal understands it or not, this is exactly what he did in his latest book. He brilliantly

Blumenthal later used in his book, e.g. ‘How to kill goyim and influence people,’ August 31, 2010, at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2010/08/how-to-kill-goyim-and-influence-people.html>, cf. *Goliath*, Chapter 57; ‘The days of ‘48 have come again,’ January 26, 2011, at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2011/01/the-days-of-%e2%80%9848-have-come-again-15-minutes-from-tel-aviv-israel-creates-a-new-refugee-camp.html>, cf. *Goliath*, Chapter 30.

²¹ For examples of views supportive of Hamas terrorism and rejectionism at the *Electronic Intifada*, see: Petra Marquardt-Bigman, Ali Abunimah goes to Gaza, May 26, 2013, at: <http://warped-mirror.com/2013/05/26/ali-abunimah-goes-to-gaza/>; and: Donate for a daily dose of hate, December 10, 2012, at: <http://warped-mirror.com/2012/12/10/donate-for-a-daily-dose-of-hate/>. Blumenthal's contributions to the *Electronic Intifada* are available at: <http://electronicintifada.net/people/max-blumenthal>, among the material published there and later also used in *Goliath* is e.g.: Bassem Tamimi: “Our destiny is to resist,” May 2, 2011, at: <http://electronicintifada.net/content/bassem-tamimi-our-destiny-resist/9894>, cf. *Goliath*, chapter 67: The Crazy Village, pp. 372-378. The quote from Blumenthal's “Acknowledgments” is featured at: Donate to The Electronic Intifada and help change the way the world sees Palestine, [December 2013], at: <http://electronicintifada.net/content/donate-electronic-intifada-and-help-change-way-world-sees-palestine/11971>

²² Jeffrey Goldberg, John Mearsheimer Endorses a Hitler Apologist and Holocaust Revisionist, September 23, 2011, at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/09/john-mearsheimer-endorses-a-hitler-apologist-and-holocaust-revisionist/245518/>.

though unwittingly managed to produce a pretty impressive journalistic account in support of my criticism of Jewish identity politics and tribal supremacy.”²³

More praise for Blumenthal's work was offered at the website of David Duke, whom the Anti-Defamation League describes as “perhaps America's most well-known racist and anti-Semite.”²⁴ Under the Blumenthal-inspired title “How to Kill Goyim and Influence People: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel,” a post on Duke's website praised “Blumenthal's writings and videos” as “extremely valuable in the study of Jewish extremism.” Echoing Blumenthal's often repeated claim that he could not have written *Goliath* if he was not Jewish, it was duly noted that Blumenthal “is not shy about using his Jewish name and looks to gain access to Jewish extremists in order to document the ugliest side of Zionism...as it pertains to Israel.”²⁵ Another column devoted to Blumenthal's book again emphasized that it “does take someone with Jewish credentials to do some of the work that Max Blumenthal does” and acknowledged frankly: “We often cite Jewish writers in order to avoid the anti-Semitic label or because we think their Jewishness gives what they say added credibility.”²⁶

Another outlet that viewed Blumenthal's “reporting” favorably was Iran's *Press TV*. The Anti-Defamation League has described the English-language channel as “the Iranian government's primary propaganda tool to promote a wide range of pernicious anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in English to a worldwide audience.” It is arguably no coincidence that former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, *Veterans Today* Senior Editor Gordon Duff, Gilad Atzmon and Max Blumenthal have all appeared on *Press TV*. Blumenthal was first featured by the channel in March 2011; according to the program's host, he was

²³ Gilad Atzmon, *Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel – A Book Review*, November 12th, 2013, at: <http://www.veteranstoday.com/2013/11/12/goliath-life-and-loathing-in-greater-israel-a-book-review/>. On *Veterans Today*, see: Anti-Defamation League, *Conspiracy Theories Linking Israel to WikiLeaks Circulate on the Internet*, December 23, 2010, at: http://archive.adl.org/main_anti_israel/conspiracy_theories_wikileaks.html#.Ur8NBa_xttw; and: P. David Hornik, *The Ten Worst U.S. Purveyors of Antisemitism, #10: Gordon Duff*, December 8, 2013, at: <http://pjmedia.com/lifestyle/2013/12/08/the-ten-worst-u-s-purveyors-of-antisemitism-10-gordon-duff/?singlepage=true>

²⁴ Anti-Defamation League, David Duke, at: http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext_us/david_duke/default.html

²⁵ Patrick Slattery, *How to Kill Goyim and Influence People: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel*, October 3, 2013, at: <http://davidduke.com/how-to-kill-goyim-and-influence-people-life-and-loathing-in-greater-israel/>. The title of this post on Duke's website combines the title of Blumenthal's book with the title for his chapter 57.

²⁶ Patrick Slattery, *What do to about anti-Zionist Zionists?* October 8, 2013, at: <http://davidduke.com/what-do-to-about-anti-zionist-zionists/>



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The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law

invited to talk about the “root causes of Islamophobia and the impact of Zionist ideology on American politics.”²⁷

While it is obviously beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comprehensive survey of the praise for Blumenthal's *Goliath* from openly antisemitic sites or individuals and from sites and activists who campaign for the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state, the following example highlights an important phenomenon that was already evident in the praise for Blumenthal at *Stormfront*: that unabashed Jew-haters are perfectly capable of appreciating the work of “‘progressive’ Jews.”

Henry Makow is described by *Wikipedia* as a “Canadian author” who, among other activities, is also a “public opponent of Zionism and Freemasonry.” Makow is indeed a published author whose books are available on his own website and through Amazon. His latest work, which came out in January 2011 under the title *Illuminati: The Cult that Hijacked the World*, reveals already in the table of contents what makes Makow so obviously a “public opponent of Zionism.” A short quote from the first few lines of his “Foreward” [sic] on “The ‘Jewish’ Conspiracy” is equally enlightening:²⁸

“the central banking cartel is the only group with both the motive and the means to take over the world. Consisting mainly of Cabala-believing Jews and Freemasons, it is the head of the octopus. Zionism, Freemasonry, organized Jewry, Imperialism, Jesuits, Vatican, intelligence agencies, mass media etc. are among countless octopus arms.”

Under the title “Israel Sinks Deeper into a Moral Abyss,” Makow promoted *Goliath* on his own website, posting a lengthy and enthusiastic review of the book sourced from *Truthdig*, a site that describes itself as “A Progressive Journal of News and Opinion.” Makow was obviously not the only one who liked this “progressive” praise for *Goliath* – there was also much enthusiasm about it on *Mondoweiss*, where the

²⁷ Anti-Defamation League, Iran's Press TV: Broadcasting Anti-Semitism To English-Speaking World, October 21, 2013, at: http://www.adl.org/anti-semitism/united-states/c/press-tv-iran.html?Multi_page_sections=sHeading_2#.Ur8Nz6_xttw. At the time of this writing, Gordon Duff's most recent Press TV column is entitled: ‘Mossad, Bush planned, executed 9/11’, December 25, 2013, at: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/12/25/341790/mossad-bush-planned-executed-911/>; see also: <http://www.presstv.ir/Contributors/248113.html>. Gilad Atzmon's contributions to *Press TV* can be found at: <http://www.presstv.com/Contributors/282797.html>. Blumenthal's *Press TV* appearance is noted here: <http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/172422.html> and here: <http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/173398.html>; a recording is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXJsuLENJKc&feature=player_embedded. Blumenthal's book is favorably mentioned by regular *Press TV* contributor David Swanson, Two kinds of countries: Israel's dangerous path, October 13, 2013, at: <http://www.presstv.com/detail/2013/10/13/329192/israels-dangerous-path/>. Elsewhere, Swanson also interviewed Blumenthal on “Israeli Ethnocracy”: <http://davidswanson.org/node/4190>

²⁸ See: Henry Makow, at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Makow; Henry Makow's bookstore, at: <http://cruelhoax.ca/>; Israel Sinks Deeper into a Moral Abyss, November 5, 2013, at: <http://henrymakow.com/2013/11/Israel-Sinks-Deeper-into-Moral-Abyss%20%20.html>

review by the “influential” journalist Chris Hedges was cheered under the title “Israel is a ‘corpse’ — Hedges on Blumenthal’s ‘Goliath.’” A short summary provided the highlights:²⁹

“here’s Hedges at Truthdig, hammer and tongs in an inspiring Old Testament manner: Zionism is a racist ideology, Israel is poisoned by the psychosis of war, and liberal American Jews deny this so as to fetishize the myth and themselves, but Blumenthal reveals the truth, Israel is a corpse.”

Hedges is also quoted among the endorsements featured on Blumenthal’s Amazon page, praising *Goliath* as one “of the most fearless and honest books ever written about Israel.”

Makow posted his own short commentary on the review, writing on his site:

“This article suggests that Israelis have been brainwashed and mobilized as a blunt instrument of Illuminati world domination. ‘Progressive’ Jews, their worst critics, are saving the Jewish soul by speaking out and deserve credit. Meanwhile, Organized Jewry promotes miscegenation, mass immigration and multiculturalism for the goyim in the West, while supporting racism and apartheid in their homeland, Israel.”

In addition, Makow posted some links to “related” material; one of them was entitled: “Israel’s New Generation of Racists.” The ten-minute clip posted on the *YouTube* channel of *The Real News* was produced by Lia Tarachansky, who serves as the site’s Israel/Palestine correspondent and is mentioned in Blumenthal’s “Acknowledgements” for *Goliath* as one of the “journalistic colleagues” and “friends” on whom he “relied heavily.”³⁰ Tarachansky’s clip could indeed serve as a short summary of *Goliath*, showing Israel as a paradise for racists, and as will be discussed below, Blumenthal also quotes Tarachansky in *Goliath*, where she describes various vague feelings that somehow add up to her sense that fascism is “the essence” of Israeli society.

²⁹ Annie Robbins and Phil Weiss, Israel is a ‘corpse’ — Hedges on Blumenthal’s ‘Goliath,’ November 5, 2013, at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/11/hedges-blumenthals-goliath.html>

³⁰ The Real News, Israel’s New Generation of Racists, April 2, 2013, at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPzYExjz6Io>; on Lia Tarachansky see her website: <http://leichik.webs.com/about.htm>.

Criticism of *Goliath*

Given how popular Blumenthal's book proved with notorious antisemites and Israel-haters, it was hardly surprising that *Goliath* was at first largely ignored by more reputable writers. A notable exception was *The Nation's* Eric Alterman, who explained that, when he learned that *The Nation* magazine would be publishing an excerpt of Blumenthal's book, he felt it was important to counter "the impression that the reflexive anti-Zionism of some of its [i.e. the magazine's] contributors is its only voice on the issue." Alterman's harshly critical comments on *Goliath* were published under the title "The 'I Hate Israel' Handbook." In an additional blog post, Alterman noted:³¹

"Had the magazine not published its excerpt, it would have been easy to ignore. It is no exaggeration to say that this book could have been published by the Hamas Book-of-the-Month Club (if it existed) without a single word change once it's translated into Arabic. [...] *Goliath* is a propaganda tract, not an argument as it does not even consider alternative explanations for the anti-Israel conclusions it reaches on every page. Its implicit equation of Israel with Nazis is also particularly distasteful to any fair-minded individual. And its larding of virtually every sentence with pointless adjectives designed to demonstrate the author's distaste for his subject is as amateurish as it is ineffective."

Alterman's criticism of Blumenthal's book included a well-deserved ridiculing of an absurd "definition" of Israeli "fascism" provided in *Goliath* [emphasis added]:

"Here, I kid you not, is the definition Blumenthal quotes of the substance of Israel's 'fascism':

'What it really is, is a feeling that you have sitting on a bus being afraid to speak Arabic with your Palestinian friends. It's a feeling when you are sitting there having dinner—what you feel when you're alive here. **It's the essence of what this society is.** And the closer we get to the brink—and everyone is feeling that we're getting to the breaking point—the worse it gets.'

Yep, that's 'fascism' alright. You can look it up."

The short quote from *Goliath* that Alterman highlights here is instructive for several reasons. First, it is obviously ridiculous to claim that in a country where everything from banknotes to road signs and official documents includes Arabic, and where every major company offers customer service in Arabic,

³¹ Eric Alterman, The 'I Hate Israel' Handbook, October 16, 2013, at: <http://www.thenation.com/article/176691/max-blumenthals-goliath-i-hate-israel-handbook>; also published in the November 4, 2013 edition of *The Nation*; see also: Eric Alterman, The Israel Hater's Handbook, Continued..., October 17, 2013, at: <http://www.thenation.com/blog/176723/israel-haters-handbook-continued>.

there is reason for “being afraid to speak Arabic” in public. Secondly, it is revealing that Blumenthal expects his readers to accept that a vague and subjective “feeling” is evidence for Israel’s “fascism” and reflects “the essence of what this society is.” To be sure, as so often, Blumenthal is hiding here behind the Israeli – in this case the already mentioned Lia Tarachansky – who provides him with this ridiculous “definition” of Israeli “fascism” during a conversation. While Blumenthal later claimed that he “did not express approval” of this “definition,”³² he actually did: as he recounts in *Goliath*, Tarachansky explained her feelings about Israeli “fascism” during a bus ride, where they were overheard by another passenger. It is worthwhile to quote the relevant paragraphs from *Goliath* to illustrate how Blumenthal himself experienced this ever present sense of a looming fascist threat that reflects the “essence” of Israeli society:³³

“A young woman in a pink cotton dress with streaks of red dye in her hair and a face caked with makeup had turned around and tuned in on our conversation from two rows ahead. We made eye contact momentarily. ‘Who are you for? Israel or Turkiya?’ she asked, looking at me with a raised eyebrow. Her tone was not accusatory, at least, not in an aggressive way. She seemed genuinely curious, but I also detected suspicion in her voice. ‘I’m just an American. You know, a tourist,’ I said, hoping to deflect a question that seemed to have only one right answer.

Now a few others on the bus were paying attention. Their craggy faces shone with layers of half-dried perspiration; most likely they were returning from jobs in affluent North Tel Aviv to their homes in Bat Yam, a working-class Russian suburb south of Jaffa. ‘You are American? You with us, yes?’ the woman said, this time more forcefully. ‘You with Israel or Turkiya?’ Someone had signaled for a stop, and the back door of the bus suddenly flung open. Without considering where I was, I darted toward the door and out into the humid night, shrugging at the woman on my way. As the doors closed, I caught a glance of her staring at me. Now Lia and I were standing on a corner of Yerushalayim Boulevard, almost a kilometer from home. I worried that she would be upset with my abrupt exit, but instead she offered empathy. ‘You can kind of see what I mean,’ she said. I nodded sheepishly and we started walking home.”

Working class people returning home from work on a bus, not quite up to Max Blumenthal’s exacting grooming standards with their faces either “caked with makeup” or shining “with layers of half-dried perspiration,” speaking less-than-perfect English and being curious about a conversation – this is how

³² For details on the quote as presented in defense of Blumenthal see Phan Nguyen, Eric Alterman on Palestine and Israel, part 2: Alterman vs. ‘Goliath’ (Updated), October 21, 2013, at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/10/alterman-palestine-goliath.html>. Similar to Nguyen, Blumenthal claimed two days later that he “did not express approval” of the quote, see: Max Blumenthal, A Response to Eric Alterman, October 23, 2013, at: <http://www.thenation.com/article/176802/response-eric-alterman>.

³³ *Goliath*, p.120f.; unsurprisingly, the chapter is entitled: The People, United.

Blumenthal started to understand the fascist “essence” of Israeli society, thereby providing yet another illustration of his *modus operandi*: just as he insisted that his short video clip recording the rants of some drunken youngsters on vacation somehow provided insight into fundamental Israeli or Jewish pathologies, he pretends that the impressions he offers in *Goliath* – no matter how subjective and highly selective, if not outright ridiculous – add up to an accurate portrayal of “the essence” of Israeli society.

Alterman noted in his review of *Goliath* that “Blumenthal’s accounts are mostly technically accurate, but often deliberately deceptive.” It may seem harsh to conclude that Blumenthal is “deliberately deceptive,” but one such rather blatant deception was publicly exposed when Blumenthal was caught fabricating a quote in support of his allegations that US troops were trained in torture by Israel.³⁴ The story supported by this fabricated quote was promptly picked up by the popular antisemitic site *Rense.com.*, and from there it made its way to Iran’s *Press TV*, which duly reported under the title “Israel behind US police brutality.”³⁵

“An investigative journalist says that police tactics used against peaceful Occupy protesters have brought to public attention the extreme militarization of US police [...] The proper term used for this ‘ruthless’ suppression of US anti-corporatism Occupy protesters should be ‘Israelification,’ investigative journalist Max Blumenthal wrote in an article published on *Rense.com.*”

It seems that the article was first published by *Al Akhbar*,³⁶ a Lebanese publication that has been described as “pro-terrorist” due to its positive views of Hezbollah; the paper is also supportive of the

³⁴ See Jeffrey Goldberg, Did Israel Train American Interrogators in Torture? (UPDATED), December 7, 2011, at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/12/did-israel-train-american-interrogators-in-torture-updated/249630/>. Alterman mentions additional examples in: Eric Alterman Replies to Max Blumenthal’s Letter, October 28, 2013, at: <http://www.thenation.com/blog/176861/eric-alterman-replies-max-blumenthals-letter>. In this text, Alterman also links to several posts that document Blumenthal’s factual inaccuracies and his failure to provide important context: Avi Mayer, Max Blumenthal and His Difficulty with Facts, October 21, 2013, at: <http://avimayer.tumblr.com/post/64683627593/max-blumenthal-and-his-difficulty-with-facts>, and Mayer, Max Blumenthal and the Gargantuan Goofs of Goliath, October 24, 2013, at: <http://avimayer.tumblr.com/post/64982750451/max-blumenthal-and-the-gargantuan-goofs-of-goliath>; Elder of Zion, Max Blumenthal wrote a book to demonize Israeli Jews, October 23, 2013, at: http://elderofzion.blogspot.co.il/2013/10/max-blumenthal-wrote-book-to-demonize.html#.UssNd6_xtx.

³⁵ Muriel Kane, Israel Behind Much Of Militarized Brutality Of US Police, December 5, 2011, at: <http://www.rense.com/general95/isbe.htm>; on Rense see the already cited information provided by the ADL at: <http://www.adl.org/combatting-hate/domestic-extremism-terrorism/c/rense-web-site-promotes.html>. The *Press TV* article is: Israel behind US police brutality, December 7, 2011, at: <http://presstv.com/detail/214315.html>

³⁶ Max Blumenthal, From Occupation to “Occupy”: The Israelification of American Domestic Security, December 2, 2011, at: <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/occupation-%E2%80%9Cocccupy%E2%80%9D-israelification-american-domestic-security>



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Assad regime in Syria.³⁷ Yet, Blumenthal wrote for *Al Akhbar*, which he regarded as “one of the most courageous publications in the Arab world,” though he eventually felt too uncomfortable with the relentless defense of the Syrian regime’s bloody repression and dissociated himself from the site in mid-2012.³⁸ However, as one commentator noted critically, Blumenthal apparently “never had a problem with the paper’s virulently anti-American and pro-Hezbollah propaganda,” and even in early June 2012, he still declared that he was “proud to write for Al Akhbar English, one of the best independent papers in the Middle East.”³⁹

There was certainly plenty of reason for Alterman to describe Blumenthal as “a profoundly unreliable narrator” whose “selectivity often gets in the way of his truth-telling.” While Blumenthal clearly formulated his “truth” well before he started working on *Goliath*, he was used to writing for an audience that couldn’t get enough of this “truth” and fully expected that his patchwork of 73 highly selective scenes of *Life and Loathing in Greater Israel* would be widely accepted as revealing the evil “essence” of the world’s only Jewish state.

In this context it is also instructive to consider some of the endorsements Blumenthal chose to feature on the Amazon page for *Goliath*. One notable endorsement attributed to *The Guardian* – which was initially displayed as the top endorsement on the Amazon page – praises *Goliath* for showing “in forensic detail the reality of the Israeli **mainstream**’s embrace [of] blatant racism against Arabs and Africans.” [Emphasis added] This endorsement is not only noteworthy because it again reflects the conceited notion that the material in *Goliath* captures Israel’s “mainstream” and its “essence,” but also because it offers yet another example of what Alterman described as Blumenthal’s “deliberately deceptive” presentation. It turns out that this endorsement is not, as one might expect, from a *Guardian* review of *Goliath*, but rather from an online article that mentions Blumenthal’s book only in passing.⁴⁰ The main focus of the article, written by self-described anti-Zionist Anthony Loewenstein, is an effort to argue that

³⁷ Michael J. Totten, Let Us Not Praise Pro-Terrorist Newspapers, November 1, 2011, at:

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/01/11/let-us-not-praise-pro-terrorist-newspapers/>

³⁸ Blumenthal’s writings for *Al Akhbar* can be found at <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/1272>; for his evolving views on the publication see: Max Blumenthal, The right to resist is universal: A farewell to Al Akhbar and Assad’s apologists, June 20, 2012, at: <http://maxblumenthal.com/2012/06/the-right-to-resist-is-universal-a-farewell-to-al-akhbar-and-assads-apologists/>

³⁹ James Kirchick, Dissent in the Ranks, June 22, 2012, at: <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/james-kirchick/dissent-ranks>

⁴⁰ When I first wrote about Blumenthal’s *Goliath*, the one sentence of the article that refers to the book was featured on the Amazon page as the top endorsement and was presented (as it still is at the time of this writing) without a name, giving only *The Guardian* as source; I therefore wrongly assumed that *The Guardian* had indeed reviewed the book, see: Petra Marquardt-Bigman, Cheering a new ‘I Hate Israel Handbook,’ November 14, 2013, at: <http://blogs.ipost.com/content/cheering-new-%E2%80%98i-hate-israel-handbook%E2%80%9999>

boycott campaigns targeting Israel are not antisemitic. While it is just another deception to present the article's one sentence on *Goliath* as an endorsement by *The Guardian*, it also illustrates once more how eager Blumenthal is to create the impression that the anecdotal evidence he offers is enough to denounce the vast majority of Israelis – or at least the vast majority of Israeli Jews – as blatant racists. This is crucially important for anti-Israel activists because, as Loewenstein's arguments illustrate, this supposed mainstream racism of Israel's Jews is then used to justify targeting the Jewish state with boycott campaigns that are ultimately intended to bring about its elimination and replacement with an "Isratine."⁴¹ It should come as no surprise that Loewenstein is co-author and editor of a book anticipating the end of Zionism and the establishment of *One State for Israel and Palestine*⁴² – which is a scenario that Blumenthal clearly also hopes for and which *Goliath* is meant to advance.⁴³

While Blumenthal would later haughtily dismiss his critics and thank them for creating the "hot air" that "a balloon needs [...] to rise,"⁴⁴ Alterman's devastating criticism of *Goliath* triggered a furious reaction

⁴¹ The sentence presented on Blumenthal's Amazon page for *Goliath* as an endorsement by *The Guardian* is from Antony Loewenstein, To support the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement is not antisemitic, November 7, 2013, at: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/07/to-support-the-boycott-divestment-and-sanctions-movement-is-not-anti-semitic>; it is noteworthy that the article required corrections, see: Adam Levick, Guardian amends Antony Loewenstein's false claim that Israeli group tried to sue Stephen Hawking, November 13, 2013, at: <http://cifwatch.com/2013/11/13/guardian-amends-antony-loewensteins-false-claim-that-israeli-group-tried-to-sue-stephen-hawking/>; and: The Guardian is forced to correct a second false allegation by Antony Loewenstein, November 17, 2013, at: <http://cifwatch.com/2013/11/17/the-guardian-is-forced-to-correct-a-second-false-allegation-by-antony-loewenstein/>. "Isratine" was envisaged in a 2009 *New York Times* op-ed by the Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi: The One-State Solution, January 21, 2009, at: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/22/opinion/22qaddafi.html?_r=0

⁴² Antony Loewenstein, Ahmed Moor, *After Zionism: One State for Israel and Palestine*, Saqi Books, 16 July 2012, 256 pages, at: http://www.amazon.co.uk/After-Zionism-State-Israel-Palestine/dp/0863568165/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1340640141&sr=8-1

⁴³ At *Mondoweiss*, one admiring reviewer wrote: "One of the best features of *Goliath* [...] comes in the form of something it doesn't do: take a position on whether the long-term solution to the conflict is one state or two. [...] By steering clear of the one state/two states debate, he [Blumenthal] denies his potential critics the chance to ignore discrimination against the Palestinians in favor of ridiculing his proposed solution as naïve." See: Rayyan Al-Shawaf, Exchanging hand wringing for truth telling: A review of Max Blumenthal's 'Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel,' October 16, 2013, at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/10/exchanging-wringing-blumenthals.html>. However, since Blumenthal chose to publish much of his writing on Israel in the past few years on sites like *Mondoweiss* and *The Electronic Intifada*, which are bitterly opposed to Israel's existence as a Jewish state, and since his writings fit the agenda of these sites perfectly, there is little doubt about Blumenthal's own views on this matter. See also Blumenthal's statements at the University of Pennsylvania quoted below.

⁴⁴ See the account of the NAF event by John Hudson, 'I Hate Israel Handbook' Author Welcomes His Haters, December 5, 2013, at: http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/12/05/i_hate_israel_handbook_author_welcomes_his_haters#sthash.g58PLOiG.dpbs

from Blumenthal and his fans, and a lengthy exchange ensued. Responding to Blumenthal, Alterman noted at the end of October that his “dreadful book” had received “virtually no attention in the print media.” Sarcastically, he also congratulated Blumenthal, pointing out that⁴⁵

“The Nation has, over the decades, published any number of extremely harsh critics of Israel and Zionism. But, as far as I’m aware, never before has anyone defended the analogizing of the behavior of Israeli Jews to that of the war criminals who led Nazi Germany. Such arguments are, unfortunately, consistent with both the quality of Blumenthal’s judgments and the honesty of his journalism.”

In an article in the *Forward*, J.J. Goldberg echoed Alterman’s assessment of *Goliath* and characterized Blumenthal as a “gonzo journalist” and “video provocateur.”⁴⁶ Goldberg’s *Forward* column also included important material about an event at the University of Pennsylvania, where Blumenthal had been hosted on October 17 by political scientist Ian Lustick to promote his book. As Goldberg reminded his readers, Lustick had authored a controversial essay published by the *New York Times* in September, where he argued for the so-called “one-state solution,” i.e. the abolition of Israel as a Jewish state in favor of a binational state that would include the territory and population of Gaza and the West Bank. Goldberg was arguably right to highlight Blumenthal’s statements at this event as particularly revealing:

“Almost halfway through their [recorded] 83-minute encounter [...], Lustick emotionally asks Blumenthal whether he believes, like Abraham at Sodom, that there are enough ‘good people’ in Israel to justify its continued existence — or whether he’s calling for a mass ‘exodus,’ the title of his last chapter, and ‘the end of Jewish collective life in the land of Israel.’

Blumenthal gives a convoluted answer that comes down to this: ‘There should be a choice placed to the settler-colonial population’ (meaning the entire Jewish population of Israel): ‘Become indigenized,’ that is, ‘you have to be part of the Arab world.’ Or else...? ‘The maintenance and engineering of a non-indigenous demographic majority is non-negotiable.’

⁴⁵ Exchange: Eric and ‘Goliath,’ Our Readers and Eric Alterman, November 25, 2013 and December 16, 2013 edition of *The Nation*, at: <http://www.thenation.com/article/177354/exchange-eric-and-goliath>; and: Eric Alterman Replies to Max Blumenthal’s Letter, October 28, 2013, at: <http://www.thenation.com/blog/176861/eric-alterman-replies-max-blumenthals-letter>

⁴⁶ J.J. Goldberg, Max Blumenthal’s ‘Goliath’ Is Anti-Israel Book That Makes Even Anti-Zionists Blush, October 31, 2013, and *Forward* print issue November 08, 2013, at: <http://forward.com/articles/186557/max-blumenthals-goliath-is-anti-israel-book-that-m/?p=all>. See also: Jonathan S. Tobin, The Anti-Zionist Civil War on the Left, November 3, 2013, at: <http://dc-web2.commentarymagazine.com/2013/11/03/the-anti-zionist-civil-war-on-the-left-max-blumenthal/>. Blumenthal claimed that Goldberg “badly mangled” what he had actually said, but he failed to explain why his friend and colleague from *Mondoweiss* would have felt that his statements betrayed “some intolerance;” see: Max Blumenthal, A Response to JJ Goldberg of the *Forward*, November 1, 2013, at: <http://maxblumenthal.com/2013/11/a-response-to-jj-goldberg-of-the-forward/>.

Lustick appears stunned. And not only Lustick. Philip Weiss, founder and co-editor of *Mondoweiss*, who was in the audience, wrote afterwards, in a rare rebuke of his own writer, that he saw 'some intolerance in that answer.'

We live in a 'multicultural world,' Weiss wrote. [...] 'The issue in the end involves the choice between an Algerian and a South African outcome.' Mass expulsion versus coexistence. 'I'm for the South African outcome.'

Blumenthal isn't. It's a chilling moment, even for the anti-Zionists among us."

The recording of the exchange between Lustick and Blumenthal should indeed be mandatory viewing.⁴⁷ It provides a valuable documentation of the shocking absurdities that pass for rational political discourse among activists devoted to the elimination of the world's only Jewish state. Blumenthal, for example, claims at one point that "Zionism is a failed project," emphasizing that his book shows that Zionism had resulted in "failure after failure after failure." In reality, of course, Israel is a modern, thriving state, and – certainly compared to Pakistan, the Muslim state created through the partition of India just a year before the Jewish state – it is arguably the most successful of the states established in the wake of World War II.

Even more revealing is the fact that both Lustick and Blumenthal clearly refer to Israel's Jews in general as "colonizers" or "the settler-colonial population." Apparently, they feel that Jews born in Israel somehow inherit this status if they have immigrant parents or grandparents, and it seems that this status also applies to the roughly 50 percent of Israel's Jewish population whose parents or grandparents came to Israel as refugees from Arab countries.

But it gets only worse when utterly absurd views combine with breathtaking ignorance and arrogance. As Goldberg recounts, Lustick refers to the biblical story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and invites Blumenthal to fancy himself in the position of God in order to decide whether there are enough "good people" in today's Sodom-like Israel to save it from destruction. Lustick also adds that from reading Blumenthal's *Goliath*, he understood that "Israel is not just a little bit fascist, Israel is a lot fascist," and he then explains that describing Israel as fascist is of course the "ultimate delegitimizing," because after World War II, "nothing fascist can even be allowed to survive."

⁴⁷ The recording of the event is available under the title: Max Blumenthal and Ian Lustick speak at Penn, posted by PennForPalestine, October 18, 2013, at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upv9KUuks_8. The relevant part of the recording (starting after 30 minutes) also shows that Goldberg provided an accurate account of Blumenthal's statements. See also: Philip Weiss, Israeli Jews must become 'indigenized' to the Arab world, Blumenthal tells Lustick, October 18, 2013, at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/10/indigenized-blumenthal-lustick.html>



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Blumenthal, who obviously didn't need convincing that Israel as a Jewish state shouldn't be allowed to survive, responds by explaining that his first concern is relieving "the suffering of the indigenous people of Palestine." According to him, the only way to achieve this is by placing "external pressure" – such as the BDS (boycotts, divestment and sanctions) movement is advocating – on Jewish Israelis in order to force them to choose between emigrating and agreeing to "become indigenized." What Blumenthal seems to mean when he talks about Jewish Israelis becoming "indigenized" is that they must agree to live under Arab rule and show a general willingness to also accept Arab dominance in cultural and social terms.⁴⁸

Given the grim fate of ethnic and religious minorities all over the Arab Muslim world, one can only conclude that Blumenthal wants Israel's Jews to share this plight or accept, quasi voluntarily, their ethnic cleansing from the region. No less absurd is Blumenthal's apparent denial of the fact that at least 50 percent of Israel's Jews are indigenous to the Middle East, with roots that go back to a time long before the Arab conquest of the region. Indeed, by insisting that non-Arabs should only be allowed to live in the Middle East if they are willing to become "indigenized" by submitting to Arab domination, Blumenthal only reveals his own bigotry.

Opposition to NAF's promotion of *Goliath*

With the exception of the fact that Blumenthal gained admirers on sites like *Stormfront* and *Rense.com*, which has been documented here for the first time, everything about Blumenthal's record and his work on Israel was known, or, at the very least, was public and easy to research well before the NAF hosted him on December 4, 2013. That is to say the NAF was willing to host an author who was known as a longtime contributor to sites devoted to promoting boycott campaigns against Israel, which Blumenthal himself sees as a means to pressure Israeli Jews in order to force them to choose between emigrating and agreeing to "become indigenized," i.e. to submit to Arab domination, both in political and cultural terms. It was also known that Blumenthal had worked for the Lebanese pro-Hezbollah paper *Al Akhbar*.

In addition, Eric Alterman's harshly critical review was available since mid-October, some six weeks before the NAF event; by the end of the month, the vitriolic backlash from Blumenthal and his

⁴⁸ This is also how Blumenthal's statements are interpreted by Jonathan S. Tobin, *The Anti-Zionist Civil War on the Left*, November 3, 2013, at: <http://dc-web2.commentarymagazine.com/2013/11/03/the-anti-zionist-civil-war-on-the-left-max-blumenthal/>



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supporters as well as Alterman's response was also public, as was J.J. Goldberg revealing coverage of Blumenthal's statements at the October 17 event at the University of Pennsylvania. There was also plenty of material available to explain why Goldberg would characterize Blumenthal as a "gonzo journalist" and "video provocateur;" indeed, Blumenthal's own acknowledgement that "less courageous publications have shied away from" publishing his work was obviously revealing, particularly in view of the fact that he had praised outlets like the *Electronic Intifada* and *Al Akhbar* as "courageous."

Given that all this information was widely known, it was anything but surprising that there was some bewilderment and opposition when news about the NAF's decision to host Blumenthal spread.

Under the title "The New America Foundation Disgraces Itself and Spreads Anti-Israel Hatred," Ron Radosh wrote at his *PJ Media* blog in late November:⁴⁹

"One could — and should — ignore Blumenthal's book. It is disconcerting to find, however, that on December 4th, the New America Foundation is having a book talk by Blumenthal, introduced by the noted counter-terrorism expert and best-selling author Peter Bergen. The announcement for the talk calls Blumenthal's book 'an unflinching, unprecedented work of journalism which depicts a startling portrait of Israeli society under siege from increasingly authoritarian politics.'"

Radosh went on to argue that, given the NAF's influence and prestige, the decision to host Blumenthal could not be taken lightly. He noted that while Blumenthal's work "has so far had an appeal only to the far Left and to the radical fringe," the NAF event would certainly help to legitimize the book. In conclusion, Radosh wondered if this was "really the kind of book the New America Foundation and its supporters want to be identified with," arguing that it was all too obvious that the flattering description of *Goliath* that was posted at the NAF website was utterly misleading and that it would be more accurate to describe Blumenthal's book "as a travesty of good journalism meant to incite hatred and disdain for the very existence of Israel."

Writing at *Commentary* on November 26, Jonathan Tobin also highlighted the NAF's influence and prestige, and conceded, as Radosh had done, that the NAF board might not have been consulted about the decision to host Blumenthal.⁵⁰ However, Tobin argued that

⁴⁹ Ron Radosh, *The New America Foundation Disgraces Itself and Spreads Anti-Israel Hatred*, November 25th, 2013, at: <http://pjmedia.com/ronradosh/2013/11/25/the-new-america-foundation-disgraces-itself-and-spreads-anti-israel-hatred/?singlepage=true>

⁵⁰ Jonathan S. Tobin, *NAF Puts Anti-Zionism on the Table*, November 26, 2013, at: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2013/11/26/new-america-foundation-puts-anti-zionism-on-the-table-max-blumenthal/>

“all the disclaimers in the world won’t change the fact that by choosing to associate their institution with a book that smears Israelis as Nazis and calls for its [i.e. Israel’s] destruction, the NAF has crossed a line that no decent individual or group should even approach. Moreover, by doing so they are also sending a dangerous signal in the world of D.C. ideas that talk about doing away with Israel is no longer confined, as it should be, to the fever swamps of the far left or the far right. Instead, thanks to the Nation and its friends at the New America Foundation, open hatred against Israel and the campaign to delegitimize Zionism have now been given an undeserved veneer of respectability in Barack Obama’s Washington.”

Tobin concluded by emphasizing that “there is something shocking and fundamentally indecent about NAF’s decision to host a writer who is the moral equivalent of the Ku Klux Klan’s David Duke.” Indeed, already weeks before Tobin was writing this, Duke’s website had praised Blumenthal, noting that his newly published book “verifies points that Dr. Duke has frequently made.”⁵¹

Tobin’s article was brought to the attention of NAF president Anne-Marie Slaughter after *Commentary* editor John Podhoretz posted the link on Twitter and mentioned Slaughter. The following day, on November 27, Slaughter responded on Twitter: “Thanks for heads up; i hadn’t seen the piece.” A few hours later, Podhoretz asked her: “and now that you’ve seen it, what will you do about it?” Slaughter responded half an hour later: “Hold the event. The best answer for speech is more speech.”⁵²

Slaughter’s decision to hold the event for Blumenthal also answered the question posed by Radosh when he wondered if *Goliath* really was “the kind of book the New America Foundation and its supporters want to be identified with.” The NAF president apparently saw nothing wrong with hosting an event publicizing a book that had been harshly criticized by respected mainstream voices, but was warmly praised by antisemites and activists campaigning for the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state. Anyone who expected that Slaughter’s remark that “more speech” was the “best answer for speech” would surely mean that the NAF moderator would have some critical questions for Blumenthal was in for a disappointment.

⁵¹ See the already cited articles from early October at: <http://davidduke.com/how-to-kill-goyim-and-influence-people-life-and-loathing-in-greater-israel/> and <http://davidduke.com/what-do-to-about-anti-zionist-zionists/>

⁵² The relevant tweets are: @jpodhoretz 9:05 PM - 26 Nov 13, at: <https://twitter.com/jpodhoretz/status/405411899262529537>; @SlaughterAM 5:08 PM - 27 Nov 13, at: <https://twitter.com/SlaughterAM/status/405714817446449152>; @jpodhoretz 7:53 PM - 27 Nov 13, at: <https://twitter.com/jpodhoretz/status/405756253991096320>; @SlaughterAM 8:23 PM - 27 Nov 13, at: <https://twitter.com/SlaughterAM/status/405763895391838208>

***Goliath* at the NAF**

The NAF event for “GOLIATH: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel” was recorded and can be watched at the NAF website or the organization’s YouTube channel.⁵³ On both sites, the short text introducing Blumenthal’s book echoes the advertising for *Goliath* on Amazon and is entirely complimentary, praising the book as “an unflinching, unprecedented work of journalism which depicts a startling portrait of Israeli society under siege from increasingly authoritarian politics.” On both sites, the text also states that the “New America Foundation hosted a discussion about his [Blumenthal’s] book and what his findings mean for the potential of peace in one of the world’s most contested regions.”

The event was hosted by Peter Bergen, the NAF’s National Security Program director and a widely recognized expert on terrorism who has authored four books on Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda.⁵⁴ At the beginning of the event, Bergen took less than a minute to introduce Blumenthal, providing essentially the same information as posted by Blumenthal on his own website.⁵⁵ Blumenthal then took the podium and, after trying to warm up his audience with some jovial remarks, started by addressing what he called the issue of “speech suppression.” He decried alleged efforts by “enforcers” to “shut down” the NAF event and other appearances during his book tour and argued that there were obvious “double standards” since there was no outcry when Naftali Bennett, Israel’s Economy Minister and the leader of the Jewish Home party, spoke at a recent event at Washington’s prestigious Brookings Institution. After listing a number of examples of how the “disturbing winds of repression” had affected other speakers like him, he finally turned to his book, and, speaking uninterrupted for almost forty minutes, gave an overview of some of the material presented in *Goliath*.

After Blumenthal’s presentation, Bergen opened the discussion by echoing Blumenthal’s claim that critics of the book were unable to refute the “facts” presented in *Goliath*. Taking the opportunity to compliment Blumenthal on an “amazing reporting job,” Bergen then claimed that criticism of the book had mainly focused on its “tone” as reflected in chapter titles that invoke comparisons with Nazi Germany, and he asked Blumenthal to explain why he had chosen these titles. Blumenthal responded that the content of the chapters determined the titles, but that supposedly offensive titles like “The Concentration Camp” [Chapter 62] merely reflected what critical Israelis were saying. In the specific case

⁵³ See: <http://www.newamerica.net/events/2013/goliath> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQ9F2MTgG4I>

⁵⁴ Peter Bergen, Director, National Security Studies Program, at: <http://newamerica.net/user/61>

⁵⁵ Max Blumenthal, About Me, at: <http://maxblumenthal.com/about/>

of "The Concentration Camp," Blumenthal explained that Reuven Rivlin, whom he described as the "grand old man of the Likud party," had used this term to criticize the detention facilities planned for African refugees.

Blumenthal then started to talk about the "lessons of the Holocaust," arguing that it began with anti-democratic laws and racist incitement. He cited Martin Luther King as having said that the "ultimate conclusion of racism is genocide", and went on to argue that those who object to a title like "The Concentration Camp" reject and even "hate" the "universalist lessons of the Holocaust" and the resulting conviction that "Never Again" should apply to anyone. Instead, Blumenthal charged, those who criticized his titles and the implied comparison of Israel and Nazi Germany wanted to enforce a "segregationist perspective" of the Holocaust that would ensure that one would not be allowed to think of the events of "Kristallnacht" when "right-wing thugs" go on a rampage "singling out people in South Tel Aviv for their ethnicity." Blumenthal emphasized that even if one was "raised to see Nazi Germany as the ultimate evil," the "segregationist perspective" ensured that it was taboo to apply the "lessons of the Holocaust" when the victims were not Jewish and therefore "of the wrong ethnicity."

Once Blumenthal finished with his response, Bergen immediately posed the next question by asking Blumenthal for his assessment of the peace process. Bergen's only reaction to Blumenthal's lengthy justification for comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany was a remark that on the basis of what he had said, he would likely be pessimistic about the prospects for peace. Since neither Bergen nor any audience member posed any critical question for the remaining half hour of the event, Blumenthal was able to present his views without being challenged on any issue. The event ended with Blumenthal claiming that his critics were unable and afraid to respond to the "challenge" that his supposedly accurate portrayal of Israel presented; according to him, the negative reactions to his book simply reflected "a lack of confidence in the kind of country Israel has become." Therefore, Blumenthal argued, his critics were reduced to trying to vilify him and prevent the necessary debate about the alarming developments described in *Goliath*. Bergen remarked that this was "a good place to end it."

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed summary and analysis of Blumenthal's further remarks, his response to Bergen's first question will be closely examined because it illustrates once again that *Goliath* contains antisemitic material and that Blumenthal is ready to defend his depiction of Israel as a state that presents an evil comparable to Nazi Germany.

In his introductory remarks at the NAF event, Blumenthal repeated some of the claims he had already made in response to Eric Alterman's sharply negative commentary on his book in *The Nation*. Blumenthal's response, which was published by *The Nation*,⁵⁶ started out with charges that explain his

⁵⁶ Max Blumenthal, A Response to Eric Alterman, October 23, 2013, at: <http://www.thenation.com/article/176802/response-eric-alterman>

somewhat enigmatic references to “enforcers” at the beginning of his NAF presentation. Claiming that he was eager “to debate the issues” raised in his book, Blumenthal asserted that he was presenting “the facts as clearly and accurately as I could” and argued:

“Without understanding the realities, no true debate can take place. In writing my book I intended to loosen the blockade of suppression of thought and discussion on the subject of Israel-Palestine. For years, especially since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a right-wing Jewish extremist, a contingent of self-appointed enforcers has attempted to suppress an honest, free and full debate. These enforcers, recently aided and abetted by Benjamin Netanyahu’s right-wing government, have painted critics who do not toe the party line or journalists who report uncomfortable facts as anti-Semitic, self-hating Jews or cheerleaders for terror. Readers of *The Nation* should recognize this kind of smearing as a form of McCarthyism.

Eric Alterman’s invective against my book in his column and blog in *The Nation* fits that last category of smear (“this book could have been published by the Hamas Book-of-the-Month Club”). Playing the enforcer, he is trying to frustrate debate, which might be a strange professional choice for the Distinguished Professor of English and Journalism at Brooklyn College and CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, and “The Liberal Media” columnist for *The Nation*.”

While Blumenthal’s conspiracy theory about an apparently vast and powerful network of “enforcers” that is “aided and abetted by Benjamin Netanyahu’s right-wing government” to maintain a “blockade of suppression of thought and discussion on the subject of Israel-Palestine” may echo antisemitic obsessions about the “Israel Lobby”,⁵⁷ it also reflects his inability or unwillingness to understand that not everybody accepts his claim that his portrayal of Israel is accurate. Blumenthal clearly has no problem when somebody concludes that *Goliath* shows the Jewish state as so irredeemably evil that it deserves to be eliminated – as his amicable exchange with Lustick at the University of Pennsylvania on October 17 demonstrates. However, when somebody criticizes the book precisely because of this and notes that *Goliath* portrays Israel in a way that mirrors the views of the Jewish state’s most implacable enemies – including Islamist terror organizations like Hamas – Blumenthal presents himself as a victim of “a form of McCarthyism.”

There was certainly no “form of McCarthyism” whatsoever at the NAF event: Blumenthal was allowed to carry on unchallenged; indeed, as already noted, NAF moderator Peter Bergen saw fit to compliment

⁵⁷ Blumenthal also had shared his frustration about a lack of interest and rejections of his work by mainstream outlets with an interviewer who confirmed to Blumenthal that his book was “so important because of the level of censorship that occurs in the U.S. corporate media, and a lot of the alternative media too, when it comes to telling the truth about the various aspects of illegal Israeli occupation.” Dennis J Bernstein, Netanyahu’s Scheme for Palestine [interview with Max Blumenthal], October 11, 2013, at:

<http://consortiumnews.com/2013/10/11/netanyahus-scheme-for-palestine/>

Blumenthal on an “amazing reporting job.” Bergen also provided Blumenthal with a chance to repeat – again without being challenged – the explanations he had already presented more than a month earlier in his response to Alterman, where he essentially argued that it was justified to compare or even equate Israel with Nazi Germany. As already noted, Alterman had reacted to this by sarcastically congratulating Blumenthal, pointing out that, while the *Nation* had a long record of publishing “extremely harsh critics of Israel and Zionism,” Blumenthal was the first to have “defended the analogizing of the behavior of Israeli Jews to that of the war criminals who led Nazi Germany.” In Alterman’s view, this was “unfortunately, consistent with both the quality of Blumenthal’s judgments and the honesty of his journalism.”⁵⁸

The pitiful quality of Blumenthal’s judgment and the utterly lacking honesty of his “journalism” was again on full display at the NAF event when Blumenthal repeated the claim from his response to Alterman that criticism of chapter titles that evoked an equivalence between Israel and Nazi Germany was unwarranted because “the substance of the chapters [...] explains the titles.” Blumenthal also repeated his claim that these titles merely reflected what critical Israeli Jews were saying about the events and developments described in the relevant chapters. The specific example he mentioned at the NAF was an interview published by *Ha’aretz* in December 2010,⁵⁹ where veteran Likud politician Reuven Rivlin, who then served as speaker of the Knesset, had been asked: “How do you feel about the detention center for [African] refugees to be built in the south of the country?”

Rivlin responded:

“As a democrat and a Jew, I have a hard time with concentration camps, where people are warehoused. [They are] not camps in the sense of extermination. But every camp where people are warehoused is difficult. The logical solution is to construct a high wall [along the border with Egypt], about which there is much talk, and then Israel won’t have to deal with a problem it has already prevented.”

Very different from what Blumenthal suggested, Rivlin made it abundantly clear that he used the term “concentration camps” not in the sense of Nazi-style extermination camps, but in the sense of internment camps, such as the facilities many Japanese Americans were forced to live in after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, or the centers operated under Australia’s policy of mandatory detention for non-citizens who arrive in the country without a valid visa. Tellingly, Blumenthal quoted in

⁵⁸ Eric Alterman Replies to Max Blumenthal’s Letter, October 28, 2013, at: <http://www.thenation.com/blog/176861/eric-alterman-replies-max-blumenthals-letter>

⁵⁹ Merav Michaeli, Knesset Speaker: Racist rabbi’s letter shames the Jewish people, December 9, 2010, at: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/knesset-speaker-racist-rabbi-s-letter-shames-the-jewish-people-1.329625>

Goliath only Rivlin's first sentence, since the clarification that Rivlin did not mean "camps in the sense of extermination" was rather inconvenient for Blumenthal's purposes.⁶⁰ Moreover, Rivlin also acknowledged explicitly that, despite his objections to "camps where people are warehoused," he viewed the large number of African refugees and migrants crossing into Israel from Egypt as "a problem" that should be addressed by securing the border with a barrier in order to prevent the influx.

While Blumenthal likes to cite Rivlin as some kind of moral authority when he wants to justify his own use of the term "concentration camp," he would need to denounce him as just another despicable Israeli racist because of his view that the large number of African refugees and migrants poses a "problem" for Israel that should be resolved by preventing them from crossing the border. Blumenthal clearly has no interest whatsoever in the very real problems caused by the massive influx of African refugees and migrants into a small country like Israel, where the vast majority of the migrants concentrate in just a few urban areas.⁶¹ Instead, he uses these problems and the resulting tensions to construct an image of Jewish Israelis as hate-filled racists who loathe all non-Jews – or at least all non-White non-Jews – and are unwilling to co-exist with them peacefully. This is crucially important for Blumenthal's efforts to depict Israeli policies towards the Palestinians as motivated primarily by racism, while ignoring or discounting other motivations, such as the need for counter-terrorism measures, self-defense or law enforcement. Blumenthal essentially denies Israel's sovereign right to control its borders and decide who can enter the country in order to work, and he presents Israeli concerns about an uncontrolled inflow of African refugees and migrants as motivated exclusively by the racism of Israeli Jews.⁶²

In *Goliath*, this approach is particularly obvious in the chapters entitled "This Belongs to the White Man" and "The Concentration Camp."⁶³ It is important to realize that this is in general a very popular strategy among anti-Israel activists, as can be illustrated by the fact that the *Electronic Intifada* has a tag for articles mentioning "Africans in Israel" which lists some two dozen posts published between December 2011 and December 2013. In one of the recently published posts on this topic, the site's co-founder and most prominent writer Ali Abunimah presents a clip co-produced by Max Blumenthal as "the video on Israeli racism The New York Times didn't want you to see."⁶⁴ Similar to Blumenthal's

⁶⁰ *Goliath*, p. 336 (i.e. in the chapter entitled "The Concentration Camp").

⁶¹ See e.g. Debra Kamin, 'South Tel Aviv is South Sudan now,' December 2, 2013, at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/south-tel-aviv-is-south-sudan-now/>

⁶² See e.g.: "Of course, the asylum seekers' greatest transgression was not being Jewish and white." *Goliath*, p. 341.

⁶³ *Goliath*, pp. 330-341.

⁶⁴ See <http://electronicintifada.net/tags/africans-israel/>; Ali Abunimah, Watch the video on Israeli racism The New York Times didn't want you to see, October 18, 2013, at: <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/watch->

approach, Abunimah asserts that the *Electronic Intifada's* "extensive coverage of the incitement and attacks on Africans" in Israel proves "that this phenomenon is not marginal, but is incited by Israel's top political leadership," and he then proceeds to make the familiar argument that this is simply "another face of the racism that Palestinians have always experienced." Quoting Blumenthal, he claims that "*The New York Times* commissioned the 11-minute video, but after the paper's editors saw it, refused to publish it." Blumenthal is also quoted as stating that he sent the clip "to some other major websites" but that "they have not even responded," even though these were sites that "had often solicited articles" from Blumenthal in the past.

The decision of the *New York Times* and "other major websites" not to feature Blumenthal's video might seem eminently justified once it is taken into account that this was one of Blumenthal's already mentioned clips that was eagerly promoted by notorious antisemites like Gilad Atzmon and his admirers on *Stormfront*. However, as Abunimah noted with satisfaction, the video was eventually featured on the *Nation's* YouTube channel, where it was viewed more than 550 000 times in less than three months, i.e. between October 17, 2013, when it was posted, and early January 2014. While the aftermath of Blumenthal's NAF event will be discussed in more detail later on, it should already be mentioned in this context that this clip was later also promoted by NAF board member James Fallows when he wrote about the NAF event in the *Atlantic*. The post by Fallows was then warmly recommended by the popular blogger Andrew Sullivan, who had previously defended Blumenthal against criticism and now suggested in yet another post under the title "Who's Afraid Of The Truth?" that it was impossible to watch this clip "without thinking of previous attempts in human history [...] to demonize, persecute and expel marginal minorities in defense of a racially homogeneous country."⁶⁵

The kind of "truth" Sullivan alluded to is of course exactly the kind of "truth" Blumenthal hoped to promote with *Goliath*, and the undeniable success of the clip illustrates the wide appeal of Blumenthal's approach despite its rather obvious bigotry and hypocrisy. Just like anti-Israel activists in general, Blumenthal prefers to ignore that the situation of refugees and migrants is hardly better in Europe. A recent report entitled "Fortress Europe: How the EU Turns Its Back on Refugees" explained that the "expectations of refugees who come to Europe often go unfulfilled. Many must struggle through long

[video-israeli-racism-new-york-times-didnt-want-you-see](#) Since the misleading claim that the *New York Times* had "commissioned" this specific video is later on repeated by the popular blogger Andrew Sullivan, it is worthwhile noting that it is obviously not correct: as Blumenthal himself explains, he had been "asked to submit something by The New York Times op docs, a new section on the website that published short video documentaries," but he "didn't produce it in time" and then simply sent them a video he had already produced. However, as Abunimah acknowledges, "some of the footage in the video has already appeared on The Electronic Intifada" and it therefore hardly qualified as an original submission.

⁶⁵ Andrew Sullivan, Who's Afraid Of The Truth? December 8, 2013, at: <http://dish.andrewsullivan.com/2013/12/08/whos-afraid-of-the-truth/>



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asylum application processes or fight against ingrained local prejudice. In some countries, they endure appalling living conditions in refugee camps; in others, they end up on the streets.” Recently filmed footage from an Italian “reception center” for refugees showed scenes that inspired widely reported comparisons with concentration camps; a report on “Europe’s Deepening Refugee Crisis” described “a cycle of degradation faced by thousands of African refugees living in Europe today;” refugees in Germany complain that they are treated like criminals; in the Netherlands, scores of asylum seekers facing deportation have committed suicide in the past decade and many more have tried to kill themselves; and the way some asylum seekers are treated in Britain has led critics to conclude that they are not even seen as human beings.⁶⁶ For each of the countries mentioned in this ad-hoc list that could easily be expanded, one could produce a Blumenthal-style “Life and Loathing.” All it would take is adding some commentary on easily obtainable video footage of drunken youngsters making racist slurs, writing up a few chapters on right-wing groups agitating for reactionary policies, describing how populist politicians exploit serious problems for their own purposes, documenting discrimination against minorities, showing how security forces overreact in some situations, and pretending that this amounts

⁶⁶ Spiegel Online, Fortress Europe: How the EU Turns Its Back on Refugees, October 9, 2013, at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/asylum-policy-and-treatment-of-refugees-in-the-european-union-a-926939.html>; France 24, Video: Italy slammed for hosing down migrants, December 18, 2013, at: <http://www.france24.com/en/20131218-lampedusa-video-shocks-italy-hosing-down-immigrants-refugees/>; Maximilian Popp, Trapped in Apulia: Europe's Deepening Refugee Crisis, June 21, 2013, at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/eu-refugees-the-plight-of-african-migrants-living-in-apulia-italy-a-906950.html>; Charles Hawley and Charly Wilder, Rage and Refuge: German Asylum System Hits Breaking Point, August 30, 2013, at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/refugee-influx-reveals-german-asylum-policy-shortcomings-a-919488.html>; Dutch News, Asylum seeker kills himself to avoid deportation, leaves two children, April 12, 2012, at: http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2012/04/asylum_seeker_kills_himself_to.php; Ellie Mae O'Hagan, When will we acknowledge that asylum seekers are human beings? November 20, 2013, at: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/20/asylum-seeker-human-beings-dying-muazu-hunger-strike>

to an accurate portrayal of the country in question.⁶⁷ It would also take very little effort to collect plenty of material for a truly shocking Blumenthal-style 500-page volume on “Life and Loathing in Palestine.”⁶⁸

The importance Blumenthal attaches to his efforts to highlight the supposedly particularly grim situation faced by African refugees and migrants in Israel is also reflected by the fact that two of the relevant chapters have titles evoking the comparison with Nazi Germany, i.e. “The Concentration Camp” and “The Night of Broken Glass.”⁶⁹ When Blumenthal responded at the NAF event to Bergen’s question why he had chosen these obviously provocative chapter titles, he talked at length about what he called “the lessons of the Holocaust.” While it is common to refer to “the lessons of the Holocaust,” the use of this term can become very problematic in arguments that focus on the alleged failure of Jews to learn the “right” lessons from the Nazi efforts to annihilate Jews wherever they could seize them. It should be obvious that for most Jews, the “lessons of the Holocaust” included first and foremost the belief that the Zionists had been right, because without a Jewish state that could provide a safe haven, millions of European Jews were left helpless and with nowhere to go in the face of the Nazi regime’s ruthless determination to extinguish all Jewish life in Europe and beyond. This is reflected in Israel’s Declaration of Independence, where the relevant paragraph states:⁷⁰

“The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people — the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe — was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of

⁶⁷ As the popular blogger Elder of Zion noted in a post on Blumenthal’s *Goliath*: “There is a great blog called ‘[Bad News from the Netherlands](#).’ The point is to publish every single story that can make the Netherlands look bad, without any balance or context, to show that in the aggregate the methods used by Israel-haters to delegitimize Israel can be used against literally anyone. Looking at only that blog, you would conclude that the Netherlands is a racist, crime-ridden state that flouts international law and has no redeeming characteristics. Max Blumenthal does exactly the same thing in his latest book about Israel - except he is far *less* objective than that blog. [...] From what I can tell he took every possible activity by every possible Israeli Jew that can be remotely construed as negative, adding some hyperbole and eliminating context, and threw it into a book that is being hawked by the usual [misozionistic](#) crowd as evidence that Israel is rotten to the core.” See: Max Blumenthal wrote a book to demonize Israeli Jews, October 23, 2013, at: http://elderofzion.blogspot.co.il/2013/10/max-blumenthal-wrote-book-to-demonize.html#.UssNd6_xtx

⁶⁸ Petra Marquardt-Bigman, Let’s do a Max Blumenthal on Palestine, December 16, 2013, at: <http://blogs.ipost.com/content/let%E2%80%99s-do-max-blumenthal-palestine>

⁶⁹ *Goliath*, pp. 336-350.

⁷⁰ The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel (May 14, 1948), at: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Dec_of_Indep.html; see also: Meanings of the Holocaust, at: <http://www.jafi.org/JewishAgency/English/Jewish+Education/Compelling+Content/Jewish+Time/Festivals+and+Memorial+Days/Holocaust+Memorial+Day/Meanings/Meanings9.htm>

the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the community of nations.”

Needless to say, this is a lesson of the Holocaust that Blumenthal not only rejects, but arguably even inverts, because his “lessons of the Holocaust” actually require the dismantling of the Jewish state. Yet, at the NAF event, Blumenthal was allowed to hold forth on the “lessons of the Holocaust” without being challenged. He argued that the Holocaust began with anti-democratic laws and racist incitement, and cited Martin Luther King, who indeed said in his famous speech “The Other America:”⁷¹ “In the final analysis, racism is evil because its ultimate logic is genocide.” King also added immediately: “Hitler was a sick and tragic man who carried racism to its logical conclusion. And he ended up leading a nation to the point of killing about 6 million Jews. This is the tragedy of racism because its ultimate logic is genocide.” However, while King argued that racism was still prevalent in America, he nowhere suggested that America should be compared to Nazi Germany and was likely to become genocidal.

By contrast, Blumenthal clearly insinuated that Israel should be compared to Nazi Germany and that the Jewish state might become genocidal. After citing King, Blumenthal continued to defend his use of titles suggesting a comparison between Israel and Nazi Germany by claiming that, unlike him, his critics rejected the “universalist lessons of the Holocaust” and the idea that “Never Again” should apply to anyone. Blumenthal went on to accuse his critics of insisting on a “segregationist perspective” of the Holocaust that made it taboo to apply the “lessons of the Holocaust” when the victims were not Jewish and therefore “of the wrong ethnicity.” As Blumenthal insinuated, anyone who does not endorse this obviously racist “segregationist perspective” should have no problems with references to the events of “Kristallnacht” when “right-wing thugs” go on a rampage “singling out people in South Tel Aviv for their ethnicity.”

While it has been shown that Blumenthal cited Reuven Rivlin in a rather misleading way, there is no doubt that once again, he could point to criticism of the riots by Israeli Jews to ostensibly justify his comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany. Indeed, even Israel’s army radio denounced the riots as a “pogrom,” but the widespread criticism of the incident in Israel alone should arguably suffice to demonstrate how inappropriate comparisons to the officially organized violence of “Kristallnacht” are.⁷² Yet, in *Goliath*, Blumenthal associates the riot in South Tel Aviv with “weeks of high-level government

⁷¹ For a transcript of King’s speech see: THE OTHER AMERICA. A Speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 14 April 1967, Stanford University, [Aurora Forum at Stanford University, April 15, 2007] at: http://auroraforum.stanford.edu/files/transcripts/Aurora_Forum_Transcript_Martin_Luther_King_The_Other_America_Speech_at_Stanford_04.15.07.pdf

⁷² For a media report on the riots in South Tel Aviv see e.g.: Neri Brenner, Clashes erupt during south TA protest; migrants attacked, Mai 24, 2012, at: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4233509,00.html>

incitement,”⁷³ and in his response to Alterman, he also claimed that there is an “officially sanctioned campaign of racist incitement and violence against Israel’s population of non-Jewish African asylum seekers.” That suggests that as far as Blumenthal is concerned, there is little difference: just as the violence of “Kristallnacht” was officially sanctioned by Germany’s Nazi government, Israel’s government officially sanctioned “racist incitement and violence” against African refugees and migrants.

One would hope that it is not necessary to detail the loss of life and the destruction wrought during “Kristallnacht” to show that the attempt to cast the riot in South Tel Aviv as a somehow comparable atrocity comes perilously close to minimizing the pogrom that is generally understood “as an essential turning point in Nazi Germany’s persecution of Jews, which culminated in the attempt to annihilate the European Jews.”⁷⁴ However, there can be little doubt that Blumenthal indeed intended to suggest that the riot in South Tel Aviv should not only be seen as a “Kristallnacht,” but that there was reason for concern that it could be a similarly ominous turning point. As he wrote in *Goliath* on one of the few occasions where he tries to evoke the comparison to Nazi Germany without hiding behind a quote from an Israeli:

“In modern day Israel, the African refugee occupied a similar role as the devious Jew in Weimar-era Nazi propaganda and the criminal ‘nigra’ constantly invoked by racist Dixiecrats such as Strom Thurmond in the Jim Crow South. According to opinion writers in center-right papers like Yedioth Ahronoth, the country’s burgeoning anti-miscegenation movement, and elements in Netanyahu’s governing coalition, the African male’s crimes were legion, but his greatest danger was his propensity for violating the sexual dignity of Jewish women, and by extension, of the Jewish nation. While the state constructed a vast internment camp in the desert for the refugees, the Jewish man on the street assumed the role of the aggrieved victim and avenger. In projecting sexual anxiety onto the Africans—‘A Sudanese man will fuck you!’—the time-tested language of genocide was updated.”⁷⁵

Throughout the NAF event, Blumenthal remained unchallenged when he defended his comparisons to Nazi Germany and emphasized that he was presenting “facts” that were crucial for understanding “the kind of country Israel has become.” Indeed, he concluded his 40 minute presentation by asserting that “all of the trends in my book will intensify under the current status quo.” Even if some in the audience might have assumed that Blumenthal was referring to Israel’s presence in the West Bank when he talked about the “status quo,” anyone really familiar with his writings and statements could have little doubt

⁷³ *Goliath*, p. 342.

⁷⁴ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Kristallnacht: A Nationwide Pogrom, November 9–10, 1938, at: <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005201>

⁷⁵ *Goliath*, p. 343



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that he views Israel's existence as a Jewish state as the fundamental problem, and that *Goliath* was written in order to facilitate efforts to delegitimize and ultimately eliminate Israel as a Jewish state.

The NAF claims on its website that the event was "a discussion about his [Blumenthal's] book and what his findings mean for the potential of peace in one of the world's most contested regions." Leaving aside the question if what happened at the NAF could be described in any meaningful way as a "discussion," the implications of the statement that Blumenthal's "findings" deserved to be pondered in terms of their consequences "for the potential of peace" should not be overlooked: a book that depicts Israel as comparable to Nazi Germany was legitimized by the NAF as a serious work that could provide worthwhile insights for peace in the Middle East.

To be sure, just as he had done in his book, Blumenthal tried at the NAF event to avoid spelling out clearly what he thought about the "potential of peace" and specific solutions to end the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel. He did eventually argue that the Palestinians never had been offered a viable state of their own and that therefore, it might be only realistic to consider alternatives to the two-state solution. But neither NAF moderator Bergen nor anyone from the audience questioned Blumenthal about the chilling endorsement for the ethnic cleansing of Israel's Jews that he had expressed during the event at the University of Pennsylvania.

Another striking omission was Bergen's apparent failure to notice that the threat from terrorism faced by Israel is conspicuously absent from Blumenthal's book. Bergen did ask one question about al-Qaeda's presence in Syria, but Blumenthal focused in his response on arguing that the Palestinian Authority used the threat of al-Qaeda's presence in the region to cast itself as Israel's irreplaceable moderate partner, and he hinted that in his view – which also happens to be the view strongly promoted by the *Electronic Intifada* – the Palestinian Authority was really acting more like a collaborator that betrayed Palestinian interests. However, given that Bergen is an expert on terrorism and al-Qaeda, one could have expected him to be aware of the fact that a recent Pew study once again showed Palestinians ranking among the top supporters of "suicide bombing in defense of Islam."⁷⁶ In the 2013 study, Palestinians were in fact the Muslim population that expressed the highest support for suicide bombings, with 40 percent agreeing that "suicide bombing in defense of Islam" is often or sometimes justified. A series of previous Pew surveys that monitored support for Osama bin Laden among Muslim populations between 2003 and 2011 also documented that Palestinians had been the most ardent admirers of the al-Qaeda

⁷⁶ The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society, April 30, 2013, at: <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/>. For a graphic presentation of some of the relevant findings of this study that also illustrate how utterly unrealistic the so-called "one-state solution" is, see: Infographic: Palestinian Islamic extremism, May 01, 2013, at: http://elderofziyon.blogspot.co.il/2013/05/infographic-palestinian-islamic.html#.UsnFxK_xttw

leader.⁷⁷ In 2003, 72 percent of Palestinians expressed “a lot” or “some confidence” that bin Laden would “do the right thing regarding world affairs;” by 2009, 52 percent of Palestinians still viewed the al-Qaeda leader with such confidence, and by 2011, when he was killed by US Special Forces in his hide-out in Pakistan, fully a third of Palestinians continued to hold bin Laden in high regard, while 28 percent viewed al-Qaeda favorably. Indeed, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh condemned bin Laden’s assassination and deplored “the killing of an Arab holy warrior.”⁷⁸

It seems reasonable to assume that al-Qaeda expert Bergen is familiar with these data, which arguably even have renewed relevance in view of recent assessments that “Al-Qaeda the organization(s) and al-Qaedaism the idea are thriving across the Arab world like never before due to the failure of the Arab Awakening to create competent reformist governments.”⁷⁹ As a result of this alarming development, “advances in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria have moved al-Qaeda and its affiliates closer than ever to Israel in strength.” Yet, the longstanding high support of Palestinians for bin Laden and terrorism in general remained unmentioned in a discussion that was supposedly devoted to the question of “peace in one of the world’s most contested regions.”

The way the event for Blumenthal was handled showed that it was merely empty rhetoric when NAF president Anne-Marie Slaughter declared that “more speech” was the “best answer for speech” in order to justify the NAF’s decision to give a platform to an author who had devoted himself for years to making the case that the Jewish state was irredeemably evil and deserved to be abolished. Blumenthal was ultimately allowed to make exactly the same case at the NAF event without being challenged even once, and Peter Bergen simply thanked him for giving everyone “much to think about.”

⁷⁷ Osama bin Laden Largely Discredited Among Muslim Publics in Recent Years, May 2, 2011, at: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-largely-discredited-among-muslim-publics-in-recent-years/>

⁷⁸ Reuters, Hamas condemns killing of ‘holy warrior’ bin Laden, May 2, 2011, at: <http://www.ipost.com/Video-Articles/Video/Hamas-condemns-killing-of-holy-warrior-bin-Laden>

⁷⁹ Bruce Riedel, The continuing evolution of al-Qaeda 3.0, January 3, 2014, at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/01/al-qaeda-terror-spread-iraq-lebanon.html#> While this article was published a month after the NAF event, it seems reasonable to expect that al Qaeda expert Bergen was aware of these developments well before the publication of this assessment.

Mainstream exposure for *Goliath* in the aftermath of the NAF event

As was to be expected, the NAF event paid off handsomely for Blumenthal in terms of getting him coverage in mainstream outlets. The day after the NAF hosted Blumenthal, John Hudson reported on the event in a post at *Foreign Policy's* blog "The Cable" under the title "'I Hate Israel Handbook' Author Welcomes His Haters." By calling the critics of a book devoted to making the case that Israel is as evil as Nazi Germany "haters," the title alone should have been enough to please Blumenthal – and he indeed expressed his appreciation on Twitter: "Very fair @John_Hudson write up of my NAF talk: <http://atfp.co/1dSzzfS> But will @ForeignPolicy now run a review of my book? cc: @djrothkopf."⁸⁰

It is noteworthy that Hudson wrote about the NAF event on *Foreign Policy's* blog "The Cable," which is supposedly devoted to covering "the foreign policy machine, from Foggy Bottom to Turtle Bay, the White House to Embassy Row." But it was the entirely expected – and from Blumenthal's perspective desired – result of the NAF's decision to host him: a book that reflected and in part recycled the anti-Israel propaganda that had made Blumenthal so popular among the activists reading sites like *Mondoweiss* and the *Electronic Intifada* had suddenly become a work that was worth mentioning on a blog devoted to foreign policy. Blumenthal was clearly hoping for even more and copied his tweet suggesting a review of his book to David Rothkopf, the CEO and Editor-at-Large of *Foreign Policy*.

Hudson quotes the NAF's Peter Bergen defending the decision to host Blumenthal by arguing: "If a think tank can't have a book event, we're not doing what we're supposed to be doing [...] It was a public event and if they wanted to challenge [the book], it was open to anybody who wanted to come." Bergen's argument should be seen in light of the fact that this "public event" gave the author of a book equating Israel with Nazi Germany some 45 minutes to present his book and another 15 minutes to answer completely uncritical questions from Bergen himself, while only the last 20 minutes were devoted to questions from the audience. But, as Hudson notes, the event "attracted a sympathetic crowd of Middle East enthusiasts" who only had praise for Blumenthal, even though the "kumbayas ended during the book signing when a reporter for the right-wing news site *Washington Free Beacon* asked Blumenthal if he was concerned about a positive review of his book by a white supremacist." Hudson rushed to add that this was "an endorsement Blumenthal did not solicit;" but one could also add that this was an endorsement he fully deserved. Needless to say, Blumenthal refused to engage in any exchange with the

⁸⁰ John Hudson, "I Hate Israel Handbook" Author Welcomes His Haters, December 5, 2013, at: http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/12/05/i_hate_israel_handbook_author_welcomes_his_haters; the post is by now dated December 7, but as the URL and Blumenthal's tweet show, it was indeed posted on the day after the NAF event. Blumenthal's tweet is from 10:37 PM - 5 Dec 13 at: <https://twitter.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/408696585871032320>



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“right-wing” reporter, explaining to Hudson that the *Washington Free Beacon* was so “desperate” that they would only “smear” him or “publish one derogatory post after another.”⁸¹

If Blumenthal had every reason to be pleased by *Foreign Policy's* coverage of the NAF event, the following day brought even better tidings: writing at the *Atlantic*, veteran NAF board member James Fallows described *Goliath* as a book that “should be discussed and read.” He also defended NAF’s hosting of Blumenthal, arguing – no doubt to Blumenthal’s great delight – that it “was the right call on general free-speech principles” to ignore critics of the event. Fallows noted that during his long association with the NAF, “this latest session was the only time we’ve been under public or private pressure to rescind an invitation for someone to speak.”⁸²

One possible explanation for this unusual “pressure” is arguably that the NAF’s event for Blumenthal was likely also the only time that the prestigious organization gave a platform to the author of a book that included plenty of material that had won praise from a motley assortment of Jew-haters, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and “progressive” activists campaigning for the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state. Yet, Fallows declared that in his view, criticism of *Goliath* as a work of “bigoted propaganda” that was “so anti-Israel it is effectively anti-Semitic” were just “flat mischaracterizations.”

Instead, Fallows argued, “*Goliath* is a particular kind of exposé-minded, documentary-broadside journalism whose place we generally recognize and respect.” Referring to Blumenthal’s previous book, *Republican Gomorrah*, Fallows noted that it “was about the rise of the Tea Party and related extremist sentiment within the GOP” and that Blumenthal’s purpose was “to document the extreme voices—the birthers, the neo-secessionists, the gun and militia activists, those consumed by hatred of Barack Obama—who were then providing so much of the oomph within Republican politics.” According to Fallows, Blumenthal’s “ambition in *Goliath* is similar” and therefore he focuses on “people he identifies as extremists in Israel—extreme in their belief that Arabs have no place in their society, extreme in their hostility especially to recent non-Jewish African refugees, extreme in their seeming rejection of the liberal-democratic vision of Israel’s future.” In order to illustrate that “the power” of Blumenthal’s book comes simply “from what he shows,” Fallows urged his readers to watch a video by Blumenthal that he embedded in his post. Fallows was clearly not the only one to feel that this was one of Blumenthal’s must-see videos: the *Electronic Intifada's* Ali Abunimah had promoted the same clip almost two months

⁸¹ See also: Alana Goodman, Top Clinton Associate Ducks Questions at Anti-Israel Book Event, December 5, 2013, at: <http://freebeacon.com/top-clinton-associate-ducks-questions-at-anti-israel-book-event/>

⁸² James Fallows, Afraid of Free Speech, on Many Fronts: PEN, Google, China, *Goliath*, December 6, 2013, at: <http://m.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/12/afraid-of-free-speech-on-many-fronts-pen-google-china-goliath/282105/>

earlier as “the video on Israeli racism The New York Times didn’t want you to see,”⁸³ and, as already noted above, this was also one of the clips produced by Blumenthal that was greatly praised by notorious antisemites like Gilad Atzmon and his admirers on *Stormfront*. The fact that the clip was viewed more than 550 000 times in less than three months, between mid-October 2013 and early January 2014, also illustrates clearly that lot of people agreed that a video entitled “ Israel’s New Racism: The Persecution of African Migrants in the Holy Land” should not be missed.

While it has been already pointed out that one could easily make similar videos for several European countries, it is admittedly doubtful that a clip with the title “The Persecution of African Migrants in Italy” would get viewed more than half a million times in less than three months. But does Fallows really think that the plight of African migrants in Israel is particularly dire? Does he really think that Israeli Jews show a hostility towards migrants that is quite unheard of in Europe or elsewhere, and that is therefore a sign of a particularly worrisome Israeli extremism?

Fallows concludes his observations by conceding that “Blumenthal’s perspective and case” could be “wrong.” But he insists that Blumenthal “is documenting things that need attention” and claims that “no one has suggested that he is making up these interviews or falsifying what he’s shown on screen.” Fallows also emphasizes that if Blumenthal is wrong, “his case should be addressed in specific rather than ruled out of respectable consideration. If he’s right, we should absorb the implications.”

As has been documented throughout this paper, Blumenthal’s work has been frequently criticized and shown to be not only full of factual inaccuracies, but also deceptive because Blumenthal presents his “facts” without crucial context. Alterman put it best when he responded to Blumenthal’s rejection of his criticism:⁸⁴

“Blumenthal adds that he does not understand why I would concede that his book is ‘mostly technically accurate’ but remain so critical. He is, apparently, unfamiliar with the concept of ‘context.’ It might be technically accurate, for instance, to say that an individual who fatally shoots a crazed killer while said killer is mowing down schoolchildren with an assault-weapon is a ‘murderer.’ But it would also be profoundly misleading, given the context. And this is the problem with Blumenthal’s facts. He tells us only the facts he wishes us to know and withholds crucial ones that undermine his relentlessly anti-Israel narrative.”

⁸³ Ali Abunimah, Watch the video on Israeli racism The New York Times didn’t want you to see, October 18, 2013, at: <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/watch-video-israeli-racism-new-york-times-didnt-want-you-see>

⁸⁴ Eric Alterman Replies to Max Blumenthal’s Letter, October 28, 2013, at: <http://www.thenation.com/blog/176861/eric-alterman-replies-max-blumenthals-letter>

Unfortunately, it is hard to see how any objective reader with even a modicum of knowledge about Israel and the Middle East could fail to realize how selective and therefore misleading Blumenthal's "facts" are. But Fallows seems spellbound by the ostensibly pervasive extremism of Israel's Jews that Blumenthal claims to uncover. In this context, it is interesting to consider the implications of Fallows's argument – which of course only echoes what Blumenthal had stated – that *Goliath* should be seen as the Israeli sequel to Blumenthal's previous book "about the rise of the Tea Party and related extremist sentiment within the GOP." Leaving aside the partisan nature of this book and the resulting controversies, it is quite obvious that, if one goes along with the sympathy Fallows shows for Blumenthal's utter despise for the Tea Party, he conveniently overlooks that *Goliath* presents Israel as one big Tea Party where out-of-control extremists are "mainstream." As Blumenthal and Lustick illustrated in their amicable exchange, *Goliath* is meant to show Israel as a present-day Sodom where just a few vastly outnumbered righteous people fight a losing battle that will end with the Jewish state's well-deserved destruction. After all, as Lustick had put it, *Goliath* shows that "Israel is a lot fascist," and being found fascist is clearly the "ultimate delegitimizing," because after World War II, "nothing fascist can even be allowed to survive." Blumenthal did not reject Lustick's take on *Goliath*, and was happy to go along with the exercise of imagining Israel as a present-day Sodom that deserves to be destroyed.

Indeed, before one ventures to defend *Goliath* as a book that "should be discussed and read," it would be advisable to find out what Blumenthal's admirers think about the book. Just considering some of the praise featured on Blumenthal's Amazon page is arguably quite revealing. There is for example this endorsement from David Hirst:

"Max Blumenthal lays bare in rich and riveting detail the full, shocking scope and virulence of a cancer, both institutional and popular, which, unchecked, will surely do more to destroy Israel from within than its enemies — essentially of its own racist and colonialist making too — from without."

The praise heaped on *Goliath* by Chris Hedges is only meagerly reflected in the short quote featured on Blumenthal's Amazon page – "[O]ne of the most fearless and honest books ever written about Israel" – and it is definitely worthwhile to read the full review under the promising title "Imploding the Myth of Israel."⁸⁵ Already the first few sentences forcefully convey the almost apocalyptic horror that is the world's only Jewish state: "poisoned by the psychosis of permanent war," "morally bankrupted," "rivals the brutality and racism of apartheid South Africa," "democracy [...] exclusively for Jews," "hijacked by extremists who are pushing the country toward fascism," "constant state surveillance, arbitrary arrests and government-run smear campaigns," "an indoctrination machine for the military," "greed and corruption." By the end of the second paragraph, there is the inevitable echo of the "Zionism is racism"-

⁸⁵ Chris Hedges, *Imploding the Myth of Israel*, November 4, 2013, at: http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/imploding_the_myth_of_israel_20131103/

mantra, and the third paragraph (with many more to come) ends with the compliment: "Blumenthal, in chapter after chapter, methodically rips down the facade. And what he exposes, in the end, is a corpse."

So just from reading two texts endorsing *Goliath*, we learn that the book's admirers conclude that it depicts the Jewish state as a sick and sickening entity that is about to be destroyed by "the full, shocking scope and virulence of a cancer, both institutional and popular [...] essentially of its own racist and colonialist making" and that it is indeed already a rotting "corpse."

Veteran NAF board member James Fallows thinks *Goliath* is a book that "should be discussed and read." David Hirst and Chris Hedges, two well-known and influential journalists, read it and were inspired to praise the book by describing the Jewish state in terms that would have been familiar to readers of *Der Stürmer*. Since similar language can also be found in the Hamas Charter, Hirst and Hedges arguably confirm Alterman's verdict that *Goliath* "could have been published by the Hamas Book-of-the-Month Club (if it existed) without a single word change once it's translated into Arabic."

But Fallows has certainly done his part to make sure that Blumenthal's *Goliath* will be read: his endorsement is now also featured prominently on the Amazon page. Moreover, by framing the NAF event for Blumenthal as a free speech issue, Fallows has, in effect, made the case that comparing Israel to Nazi Germany is the kind of free speech the NAF should be ready to defend, and Blumenthal was indeed not challenged in any way when he justified this comparison during the NAF event. However, since Fallows rejected criticism of *Goliath* as a work of "bigoted propaganda" that was "so anti-Israel it is effectively anti-Semitic," it is important to emphasize that there can be no doubt whatsoever about what Blumenthal wants his readers to take away from *Goliath*. If it was not clear enough from the reviews Blumenthal featured on his Amazon page, it certainly became clear when he recommended a "brief but thorough review of *Goliath*" to his more than 27,000 Twitter followers and explicitly thanked the blogger who had posted the review for the "praise," which focused exclusively on Blumenthal's ability to make "the similarities between Nazi Germany and today's Israeli regime [...] impossible to avoid."⁸⁶ Indeed, the review, already quoted more extensively in the introduction, concluded:

"As I read *Goliath*, one thought [...] kept cropping up throughout: Apart from the specific group, it's [sic] flag, and all the other trappings of a national mythos and its veneration, are the aims and methods of the 'pure' Zionist state so very different than those of the 'pure' Aryan one?"

After the endorsement from a veteran NAF board member, additional praise for a book that was written to convince readers that Israel should be equated with Nazi Germany was simply some more icing on

⁸⁶ @MaxBlumenthal 11:57 PM - 8 Jan 14, at: <https://twitter.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/421038034545827840>;
@MaxBlumenthal 12:04 AM - 9 Jan 14, at: <https://twitter.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/421039671251329024>;
Papicek, Review of *Goliath*, by Max Blumenthal, January 8, 2014, at: <http://www.procesverbal.info/pv/?p=3365>

Blumenthal's cake. The popular blogger Andrew Sullivan – who, as Jeffrey Goldberg once put it, evolved “from wild-eyed Zionist to vitriolic Israel-basher” – had rushed to Blumenthal's defense already in early November.⁸⁷ Sullivan acknowledged that he hadn't read *Goliath*, but he obviously knew right away that when it was “Blumenthal vs Alterman,” Alterman's critique of *Goliath* had to be denounced as a “lazy hatchet job performed [...] by one of the more egregiously nasty writers in America.”⁸⁸ The day after the NAF event, Sullivan posted a short entry entitled “Not So Mad Max,” where he linked to the *Foreign Policy* report on the NAF event and a review of *Goliath* “from Max's left.” A few days later, he published another post under the title “Who's Afraid Of The Truth?” where he warmly recommended the piece by Fallows, including the video clip that Fallows had urged his readers to view.⁸⁹ Sullivan commented on the video:

“I don't know how you can watch the video above without thinking of previous attempts in human history [...] to demonize, persecute and expel marginal minorities in defense of a racially homogeneous country. Period.”

To paraphrase Sullivan: Who is afraid of the truth that Israel is like Nazi Germany?

It is arguably telling that a video that reveals this “truth” would get more than half a million views in less than three months – and it is even more telling that this clip was first promoted by unabashed antisemites and devoted anti-Israel activists, and then picked up by respected mainstream writers like Fallows and popular bloggers like Sullivan.

Interestingly, Sullivan also hinted at a conspiracy to keep this clip away from the public, claiming: “In a particularly glaring twist, the New York Times commissioned the video then simply refused to air it.” While Sullivan didn't divulge his source for this claim, it almost certainly came from Abunimah's *Electronic Intifada* post “Watch the video on Israeli racism The New York Times didn't want you to see.”⁹⁰ That Sullivan was content to simply echo Abunimah's claims is a revealing illustration of how the

⁸⁷ Jeffrey Goldberg, Leon Wieseltier, Andrew Sullivan and Anti-Semitism, February 10, 2010, at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/02/leon-wieseltier-andrew-sullivan-and-anti-semitism/35682/>; see also: Liam Hoare, The Unhinging of Andrew Sullivan, November 2013, at: <http://www.thetower.org/article/unhinging-andrew-sullivan/>

⁸⁸ Andrew Sullivan, Blumenthal vs Alterman, November 4, 2013, at: <http://dish.andrewsullivan.com/2013/11/04/blumenthal-vs-alterman/>

⁸⁹ Andrew Sullivan, Not So Mad Max, December 5, 2013, at: <http://dish.andrewsullivan.com/2013/12/05/not-so-mad-max/>, and: Who's Afraid Of The Truth? December 8, 2013, at: <http://dish.andrewsullivan.com/2013/12/08/whos-afraid-of-the-truth/>

⁹⁰ Ali Abunimah, Watch the video on Israeli racism The New York Times didn't want you to see, October 18, 2013, at: <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/watch-video-israeli-racism-new-york-times-didnt-want-you-see>



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myth of the all-powerful network of “enforcers” that Blumenthal likes to complain about is built. As already noted, Abunimah himself quoted Blumenthal’s explanation that he had been “asked to submit something by The New York Times op docs, a new section on the website that published short video documentaries,” but that he “didn’t produce it in time” and then simply submitted a video he had already produced. However, as Abunimah acknowledged, “some of the footage in the video has already appeared on The Electronic Intifada.” It therefore hardly qualified as an original submission, and it would have been rather unusual if the *New York Times* had been willing to pay for work that had already been featured at the *Electronic Intifada*.

Yet, Sullivan was apparently eager to insinuate that the *New York Times* wanted to suppress the “truth” that Israel is like Nazi Germany, and he concluded his post by expressing his dismay that the *New York Times* had so far failed to review *Goliath*, which was in his view either due to sheer cowardice or the unfortunate unwillingness to examine “arguments that undermine core factions or lobbies.”

Roger Waters praises *Goliath*

Roger Waters, the former front man of Pink Floyd whose performances are still attracting record audiences, is also a celebrity activist who has been supporting BDS campaigns calling for boycotts of Israel for several years. In the summer of 2013, Waters displayed a Star of David on a huge inflatable pig at a concert in Belgium and was accused of using antisemitic imagery. Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center noted that the Star of David was “the only symbol of a people and its heritage on the floating pig” and that it was shown “alongside icons of fascism, dictatorships and multinational corporations.”⁹¹ Shortly afterwards, some remarks made by Waters in the context of his efforts to support the BDS movement once again seemed to “let an antisemitic cat out of the anti-Israel bag.”⁹² By early December, Waters had “nearly finished Max Blumenthal’s book ‘Goliath: Life and Loathing in greater Israel’” and he elaborated on his views about Israel in a lengthy interview with a fellow BDS

⁹¹ Abraham Cooper , When pigs fly...the Star of David, August 5, 2013, at: <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/when-pigs-fly-the-star-of-david/>

⁹² Mark Gardner, Roger Waters & the sickening wall of silence on antisemitism, September 10th, 2013, at: <http://blog.thecst.org.uk/?p=4495>; see also: ADL Open Letter to Roger Waters, August 22, 2013, <http://www.adl.org/press-center/press-releases/israel-middle-east/adl-open-letter-to-roger-waters.html>

activist.⁹³ Once it became known what Waters told his sympathetic interviewer, Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League, who had insisted on giving Waters the benefit of the doubt during the previous controversies, reluctantly acknowledged that the rock star's "comments about Jews and Israel have gotten progressively worse over time. It started with anti-Israel invective, and has now morphed into conspiratorial anti-Semitism."⁹⁴

When asked about his views on Israel in the interview, Waters lost no time and pointed out right away that Israel deserved to be boycotted as much as Nazi Germany and its allies once did:

"The situation in Israel/ Palestine, with the occupation, the ethnic cleansing and the systematic racist apartheid Israeli regime is unacceptable. So for an artist to go and play in a country that occupies other people's land and oppresses them the way Israel does, is plain wrong. They should say no. I would not have played for the Vichy government in occupied France in the Second World War, I would not have played in Berlin either during this time. [...]

I have nearly finished Max Blumenthal's book 'Goliath: Life and Loathing in greater Israel'. It's a chilling read. It's extremely well written in my view. He is a very good journalist and takes great pains to make sure that what he writes is correct. He also gives a voice to the other side. The voice, for instance, of the right wing rabbinate, which is so bizarre and hard to hear that you can hardly believe that it's real. They believe some very weird stuff you know, they believe that everybody that is not a Jew is only on earth to serve them and they believe that the Indigenous people of the region that they kicked off the land in 1948 and have continued to kick off the land ever since are sub-human. The parallels with what went on in the 30's in Germany are so crushingly obvious that it doesn't surprise me that the [BDS] movement that both you and I are involved in is growing every day."

Asked why not more artists supported the "Cultural Boycott" of Israel, Waters responded at length, showing off what he had learned from Blumenthal about Israel's "propaganda machine" and all the many other ways in which the Jewish state and its lobby try to manipulate and deceive everyone – and just like Blumenthal is fond of emphasizing how much "courage" it takes to expose all these machinations, Waters explained that people were simply too "terrified" to show solidarity with boycott advocates like him:

"Well, where I live, in the USA, I think, A: they are frightened and B: I think the propaganda machine that starts in Israeli schools and that continues through all the Netanyahu's bluster is

⁹³ Frank Barat, An Interview with Roger Waters, December 6-8, 2013, at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/12/06/an-interview-with-pink-floyds-roger-waters/>

⁹⁴ Times of Israel staff, ADL sadly concludes that Roger Waters is an anti-Semite, December 12, 2013, at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/adl-sadly-concludes-that-roger-waters-is-an-anti-semite/>

poured all over the United States, not just Fox but also CNN and in fact in all the mainstream media. It's like a huge bucket of crap that they are pouring into the mouth of a gullible public in my view, when they say 'we are afraid of Iran, it is going to get nuclear weapons...'. It's a diversionary tactic. The lie that they have told for the last 20 years is 'Oh, we want to make peace", you know and they talk about Clinton and Arafat and Barak being in Camp David and that they came very close to agreeing, and the story that they sold was 'Oh Arafat fucked it all up'. Well, no, he did not. This is not the story. The fact of the matter is no Israeli government has been serious about creating a Palestinian state since 1948. They've always had the Ben Gurion agenda of kicking all the Arabs out of the country and becoming greater Israel. They tell a lie as part of their propaganda machinery whilst doing the other thing but they have been doing it so obviously in the last 10 years. [...]

It is a very complicated situation which is why you and I and all the other people in the world who care about their brothers and sisters and not just about the people of our own faith, our own colour, our own race or our own whatever, have to stand in solidarity shoulder to shoulder. This has been a very hard sell particularly where I live in the United States of America. The Jewish lobby is extraordinary powerful here and particularly in the industry that I work in, the music industry and in rock'n roll as they say. I promise you, naming no names, I've spoken to people who are terrified that if they stand shoulder to shoulder with me they are going to get fucked. They have said to me 'aren't you worried for your life?' and I go 'No, I'm not'."

Waters went on to recount how a prominent Israeli concert organizer had tried to bribe him to betray his principles:

"You know that Shuki Weiss (preeminent Israeli promotor[sic]) was offering me a hundred thousand people at hundred dollars a ticket a few months ago to come and play in Tel Aviv! 'Hang on, that's 10 million dollars', how could they offer it to me?! And I thought Shuki are you fucking deaf or just dumb?! I am part of the BDS movement, I'm not going anywhere in Israel, for any money, all I would be doing would be legitimizing the policies of the government."

David Duke was pleased. Under the title "Pink Floyd Rock Star Exposes Jewish Lobby," he posted some excerpts from the interview, which he introduced with the short comment: "Pink Floyd Rock Star Roger Waters has revealed that the 'Jewish lobby' controls the political discourse in America and the music industry in America—and uses that power to suppress any dissent about Israel."⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Pink Floyd Rock Star Exposes Jewish Lobby, December 29, 2013, at: <http://davidduke.com/pink-floyd-rock-star-exposes-jewish-lobby/>



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Duke's post was cross-posted at *The Daily Stormer* under the title "Roger Waters Condemns the Jews" and the link to this post was then shared and debated on *Stormfront*, where much support for Waters had been voiced in previous instances, particularly when he was "accused of anti-Semitism."⁹⁶

How anti-Israel activists define anti-Semitism

Among the praise lavished on *Goliath* is one article published at David Duke's website that contains some thoughts about the importance of avoiding "being stigmatized as anti-Semitic" because this is "the ultimate stigma in our society;" and the article's author, Patrick Slattery offers some advice on how to go about it.⁹⁷ While Slattery acknowledges that "Blumenthal's recent book and much of his other work have been extremely valuable," he also expresses reservations because Blumenthal "refuses to point out the preponderance of Jewish power in the United States." Slattery goes on to argue that there are others like Blumenthal: "Countless Jews do very important work exposing certain aspects of Zionism regarding Israel, yet at the same time defend, or at least draw attention away from, Jewish domination of the United States and other Western countries."

Slattery then tries to explain why "much of the 'anti-Zionist' Palestinian solidarity movement has come to be dominated by Jews who cannot reject Zionism." After mentioning the stereotypical Jewish tendency to seize control, Slattery argues that Jews "have less of a chance of being stigmatized as anti-Semitic (and that is the ultimate stigma in our society) for engaging in these activities" and that therefore, "the organizations themselves welcome Jewish involvement in their leadership as it shields them from charges of anti-Semitism." In Slattery's view, the price of this strategy is "that these Jewish leaders then keep the organization focused as narrowly as possible on land Israel occupied in 1967, while avoiding Jewish seizure of the rest of Palestine in 1948 and of course the Jewish occupation of the

⁹⁶ Roger Waters Condemns the Jews, December 10, 2013, at: <http://www.dailystormer.com/roger-waters-condems-the-jews/> [note that Duke's post is now dated December 29; i.e. it was likely updated or edited]; the link to this post was shared on *Stormfront* on December 11, 2013, at: <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1010690/>; for one of many previous examples of *Stormfront* posts on Waters see: Former Pink Floyd frontman Roger Waters' is accused of anti-Semitism, July 25, 2013, at: <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t983134/>

⁹⁷ Patrick Slattery, What do to about anti-Zionist Zionists? October 8, 2013, at: <http://davidduke.com/what-do-to-about-anti-zionist-zionists/>

seats of power in our own country.” However, Slattery eventually acknowledges that Duke’s website is using the same tactics to avoid accusations of anti-Semitism: “We often cite Jewish writers in order to avoid the anti-Semitic label or because we think their Jewishness gives what they say added credibility.”

While Blumenthal can certainly not be accused of “avoiding Jewish seizure of the rest of Palestine in 1948” – after all, he views the Jewish state as a principally illegitimate colonial outpost in “indigenous” Arab lands – he is clearly trying as hard as the David Duke team “to avoid the anti-Semitic label,” and he even employs exactly the same tactics. Blumenthal seriously seems to think that if he can quote an Israeli Jew with a statement that suggests a comparison to Nazi Germany – even if it is as misleading as his use of Rivlin’s “concentration camp” – he can safely denounce and ridicule critics who accuse him of anti-Semitism.⁹⁸

This seems to be another demonstration of what Alterman politely described as Blumenthal’s apparent unfamiliarity with the concept of “context.” If Israeli Jews make statements that imply a comparison of Israel with Nazi Germany, other Israeli Jews who hear such statements have plenty of knowledge about the country they live in to determine the merit of this comparison – and those making these statements know full well that the vast majority of their compatriots will not take them very serious, but will instead tend to dismiss such rhetoric as politically motivated hyperbole. It is a very different matter when such statements are collected for the express purpose of using them in a 500-page book designed to convince readers all over the English-speaking world that Nazi-like phenomena are “mainstream” in the Jewish state and reflect its “essence.” That this was indeed Blumenthal’s intention is beyond doubt: he has expressed his appreciation for at least one review by a blogger who praised *Goliath* for showing over and over again that Israel was just like Nazi-Germany; he features on his Amazon page endorsements taken from reviews that describe Israel as a sick and sickening “corpse”; and, in his exchange with Lustick, he clearly agreed with the interpretation that *Goliath* proves that the Jewish state is too fascist to be allowed to survive, which means, according to Blumenthal, that Israel’s Jews should be forced – through the BDS movement that Blumenthal supports – to choose between emigration and becoming “indigenized” by submitting to Arab domination in political, cultural and social terms.

⁹⁸ This is exactly what Blumenthal did when he posted a tweet with a cartoon by Carlos Latuff, ridiculing the Wiesenthal’s Center Marvin Hier as mad for including some prominent BDS activists, among them Blumenthal and Waters, on the “2013 anti-Semitic blacklist.” When a well-meaning person reacted by warning Blumenthal: “@MaxBlumenthal please do not retweet Latuff cartoons. That man is indeed an actual antisemite, and has penned some things quite vile,” Blumenthal responded by asking for “evidence.” When he was supplied with a lot of evidence – and some astonished commentary that he was unaware of Latuff’s record – a long debate developed, but Blumenthal himself barely participated except to defend Latuff’s work on one occasion, see: @MaxBlumenthal 10:55 PM - 5 Jan 14, at: <https://twitter.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/419935113489563648>; @OwenRBroadhurst 12:31 AM - 6 Jan 14, at: <https://twitter.com/OwenRBroadhurst/status/419959244142960640>

In this context, it is instructive to consider Blumenthal's reaction to his critics. While he has no problem with admirers who praise his book for justifying comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany, he gets very upset when his critics denounce his book for the very same comparisons. He likes to emphasize how much "courage" it takes to present Israel as he does, and he praises the outlets and individuals who agree with his views and support him in his endeavor to present the Jewish state as a present-day Sodom that deserves to be destroyed. Those who oppose the views for which he likes to be praised are denounced as ruthless "enforcers" who are part of a concerted effort that is "aided and abetted by Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government" to maintain a "blockade of suppression of thought and discussion on the subject of Israel-Palestine" – a veritable "Zionist" conspiracy suppressing information and freedom of speech by smearing courageous people like Blumenthal with accusations of anti-Semitism in order to shield the Jewish state from being exposed as the Nazi Germany of our time that must be forced into an unconditional surrender.

It is a well-known phenomenon that people who claim that they only "criticize" Israel or, as in the case of Blumenthal, that they only tell the "truth" about Israel, react to any criticism of their views and statements as antisemitic with the claim that this criticism is designed to suppress debate. Blumenthal himself would likely also argue that he has proven his rejection of "real" anti-Semitism by denouncing Gilad Atzmon.⁹⁹ For the anti-Israel activists of the BDS movement, Atzmon's unhinged rants have indeed provided a convenient way to shore up their shaky claims that they know very well how to distinguish between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.¹⁰⁰ Atzmon asserted recently that Abunimah once suggested to him that they could find "grounds for a lot of agreement" if Atzmon replaced his references to "Jewish" faults with criticism of "Zionist" evils.¹⁰¹ While Abunimah strenuously rejected this interpretation, his output at the *Electronic Intifada* and on Twitter often reads as if he actually followed his own advice.

⁹⁹ Gilad Atzmon, Max Blumenthal on Anti-Semitism, Neo Fascists and Gilad Atzmon (Amusing As Well As Tragic), August 22, 2013, at: <http://www.gilad.co.uk/writings/max-blumenthal-on-anti-semitism-neo-fascists-and-gilad-atzmo.html>. On Atzmon, see e.g.: Yaniv Halily, The protocols of Gilad Atzmon, November 14, 2011, at: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4147243,00.html>; David T, Even More Atzmon, March 10th 2009, at: <http://hurryupharry.org/2009/03/10/more-atzmon/>; both articles contain many quotes from Atzmon that illustrate that he and Blumenthal see Israel in very similar ways.

¹⁰⁰ See e.g. the documentation provided by Avi Mayer, The Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Its Anti-Semitic Connections, (December 2012), at: <http://storify.com/avimayer/the-palestine-solidarity-campaign-and-anti-semitis>; Petra Marquardt-Bigman, Free Gaza Movement discusses the evils of propaganda and racism, October 5, 2012, at: <http://warped-mirror.com/2012/10/05/free-gaza-movement-discusses-the-evils-of-propaganda-and-racism/>.

¹⁰¹ Gilad Atzmon, Why, When and How Ali Abunimah Asked Me To Lie For The Cause? (the full transcript), October 17, 2013, at: <http://www.gilad.co.uk/writings/why-when-and-how-ali-abunimah-asked-me-to-lie-for-the-cause.html>

This is largely due to the fact that activists like Abunimah define opposition “to all forms of racism and bigotry” as opposition to “anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Zionism;” they also reject “the cynical and baseless use of the term anti-Semitism as a tool for stifling criticism of Israel or opposition to Zionism.” As a result of this peculiar stance, one of the favorite arguments of anti-Israel activists is that considering any criticism of Israel antisemitic is actually evidence of anti-Semitism, because it supposedly implies the “false generalization” that “simply because someone is Jewish, they support Zionism or the colonial and apartheid policies of the state of Israel.”¹⁰² A similarly tortured logic is reflected in Blumenthal's inverted “lessons of the Holocaust” that require the realization that the Jewish state is as evil as Nazi Germany and that its Jews have to be ethnically cleansed if they are unwilling to “become indigenized” by submitting to Arab domination.

When it comes to Blumenthal, it turns out that Atzmon underestimated how much they agreed. He wrote in August 2012, well before *Goliath* was published:

“I am indeed critical of the ‘colonial paradigm’ which Blumenthal adheres to. [...] I argue adamantly that the colonial paradigm is there to divert the attention from the embarrassing fact that the Jewish State being racially driven, nationalist and expansionist is actually closer in its political nature to Nazi Germany rather than to South Africa. I guess that Max Blumenthal, who operates within Jews-only political cells doesn't like this equation.”

Once *Goliath* was published, both Atzmon himself and one of his friends at David Duke's website realized that there was more common ground than they had expected. As Slattery put it: Blumenthal's “book underscores some of the points that he attacks Gilad Atzmon for making.”¹⁰³ Atzmon himself emphasized that he really wanted “Blumenthal's book to succeed and be read widely” because he “brilliantly though unwittingly managed to produce a pretty impressive journalistic account in support of my criticism of Jewish identity politics and tribal supremacy.”¹⁰⁴

While Blumenthal vacillated between denouncing his critics as ruthless “enforcers” trying to stifle debate and thanking them for helping sell his book by showing how controversial it is, it was arguably the praise Blumenthal embraced that proved his critics right. No matter how much Blumenthal might

¹⁰² Ali Abunimah, The struggle for Palestinian rights is incompatible with any form of racism or bigotry: a statement by Palestinians, October 12, 2012, at: <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/struggle-palestinian-rights-incompatible-any-form-racism-or-bigotry-statement>. This is what Wistrich has called “‘anti-racist’ racism,” see: Robert S. Wistrich, *From Ambivalence to Betrayal: The Left, the Jews, and Israel* (Studies in Antisemitism), University of Nebraska Press 2012.

¹⁰³ Patrick Slattery, How to Kill Goyim and Influence People: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel, October 3, 2013, at: <http://davidduke.com/how-to-kill-goyim-and-influence-people-life-and-loathing-in-greater-israel/>

¹⁰⁴ Gilad Atzmon, Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel – A Book Review, November 12th, 2013, at: <http://www.veteranstoday.com/2013/11/12/goliath-life-and-loathing-in-greater-israel-a-book-review/>

reject endorsements by Gilad Atzmon and his friends at David Duke's site and similar outlets, the fact of the matter remains that the most ardent praise for *Goliath* is always offered by people who appreciate Blumenthal's book for supposedly vindicating the view that the Jewish state is inherently evil and deserves to be seen as, and treated like, Nazi Germany.

In this context it is instructive to consider some of the material Blumenthal recently collected to show "the emerging bonds between international right-wing extremists and the state of Israel in the context of historical Zionist collaboration with anti-Semitic rightists."¹⁰⁵ Among the texts Blumenthal recommended was "Massad's work on the symbiosis of Zionism & anti-Semitism." Blumenthal linked to an article published by *Al Jazeera* in May 2013, which had prompted the widely respected commentator Jeffrey Goldberg to tweet sarcastically: "Congratulations, al Jazeera: You've just posted one of the most anti-Jewish screeds in recent memory." As Blumenthal notes, Massad's controversial piece, entitled "The last of the Semites," was at one point "censored" by *Al Jazeera*, but eventually re-posted, and Blumenthal asserts that Massad's work on the topic has never been "countered." While this controversy has been documented in considerable detail elsewhere,¹⁰⁶ it is worthwhile noting in the context of this paper that Blumenthal agrees with an article that boils down to the preposterous argument that Nazis and Zionists were natural allies due to their shared anti-Semitism. Employing the same tortured logic that is reflected in the ostensible rejection of anti-Semitism promoted by the *Electronic Intifada's* Ali Abunimah, Massad claims that

"Israel and the Western powers want to elevate anti-Semitism to an international principle [...] They insist that for there to be peace in the Middle East, Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims must become, like the West, anti-Semites by espousing Zionism and recognising Israel's anti-Semitic claims [i.e. Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state]."

Ultimately, this is why, as far as Blumenthal and his admirers are concerned, it is simply ridiculous that the Wiesenthal Center included the author of *Goliath* in the "2013 Top Ten Anti-Semitic/ Anti-Israel Slurs" under the category "The Power Of The Poison Pen."¹⁰⁷ In the Orwellian world of Blumenthal and

¹⁰⁵ Max Blumenthal, Zionism, Anti-Semitism, and the Extreme Right, (December 2013), at: <http://storify.com/MaxBlumenthal/zionism-anti-semitism-and-the-extreme-right>

¹⁰⁶ On this controversy and all related quotes here, see my detailed documentation and commentary: Petra Marquardt-Bigman, Good Jews, bad Jews, and the ugly writings of Columbia University Professor Joseph Massad, May 22, 2013, at: <http://warped-mirror.com/2013/05/22/good-jews-bad-jews-and-the-ugly-writings-of-columbia-university-professor-joseph-massad/>

¹⁰⁷ SWC, 2013 Top Ten Anti-Israel/Anti-Semitic Slurs, at: <http://www.wiesenthal.com/atf/cf/%7B54d385e6-f1b9-4e9f-8e94-890c3e6dd277%7D/TOP-TEN-2013.PDF>; see also: SWC: Waters' Venomous Anti-Israel Attacks Rank him in Top Ten Anti-Semites of 2013, December 9, 2013, at: http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lsKWLbPJLnF&b=8486393&ct=13440781#.UtBiRa_xttw; Benjamin Weinthal, Wiesenthal releases 'Top Ten 2013 anti-Semitic, anti-Israel slurs' list, December 30, 2013,



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his fellow anti-Israel activists, Zionism is anti-Semitism, whereas campaigning for the elimination of the world's only Jewish state is an imperative derived from the "lessons of the Holocaust" and thus evidence for opposition to anti-Semitism.

Conclusion: The NAF and the power of the poison pen

When veteran NAF board member James Fallows described *Goliath* as a book that "should be discussed and read" and defended NAF's hosting of Blumenthal with the argument that it "was the right call on general free-speech principles" to ignore opposition to the event, he also dismissed criticism of *Goliath*, claiming that it amounted to "flat mischaracterizations" to describe the book as "bigoted propaganda" that is "so anti-Israel it is effectively anti-Semitic."¹⁰⁸ The problem for Fallows is that *Goliath's* admirers agree with the book's critics that Blumenthal provided an account of Israel that shows the Jewish state as irredeemably evil – so much so that it is an inevitable conclusion that Israel is the Nazi Germany of our time and should be treated accordingly.

Fallows may disagree both with the book's critics and its admirers, but that would mean that he also disagrees with the book's author, because there can be no doubt about what Blumenthal wanted his readers to take away from *Goliath*. This is not only evident from friendly exchanges like the one Blumenthal had with Lustick and the reviews that provided the endorsements featured on the book's Amazon page, but also from the remarkable fact that Blumenthal publicly chose to thank an anonymous blogger for praising *Goliath* in a "brief but thorough review."¹⁰⁹ Aside from the only caveat that *Goliath* perhaps "doesn't stress enough that the rise of Jewish fascism [...] was inevitable," blogger Papicek

at: <http://www.jpost.com/Jewish-World/Jewish-Features/Wiesenthal-releases-Top-Ten-2013-anti-Semitic-anti-Israel-slurs-list-336564>. For Blumenthal's reaction, see reference 87 and Annie Robbins, Marvin Hier is making his list, checking it twice, January 6, 2014, at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2014/01/marvin-making-checking.html>

¹⁰⁸ James Fallows, *Afraid of Free Speech, on Many Fronts: PEN, Google, China, Goliath*, December 6, 2013, at: <http://m.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/12/afraid-of-free-speech-on-many-fronts-pen-google-china-goliath/282105/>

¹⁰⁹ @MaxBlumenthal 11:57 PM - 8 Jan 14, at: <https://twitter.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/421038034545827840>; @MaxBlumenthal 12:04 AM - 9 Jan 14, at: <https://twitter.com/MaxBlumenthal/status/421039671251329024>; Papicek, *Review of Goliath, by Max Blumenthal*, January 8, 2014, at: <http://www.procesverbal.info/pv/?p=3365>

makes it very clear that what impresses him so much is that “[r]eading *Goliath*, the similarities between Nazi Germany and today’s Israeli regime are impossible to avoid.”

As noted before, it is often difficult to show antisemitic intent, but Blumenthal makes it real easy.

So what to make of the fact that a prestigious think tank like the NAF and a “highly acclaimed author, journalist, editor, and media commentator” like James Fallows, who is also the founding Chairman of New America’s Board of Directors,¹¹⁰ insist that it was entirely appropriate for a book written with the intent to make the case that Israel is the Nazi Germany of our time to be presented at one of the organization’s National Security Program events? What to make of the argument that opposing the promotion of a book like Blumenthal’s *Goliath* violates “general free-speech principles?”

As *Commentary*’s Jonathan Tobin has rightly emphasized:¹¹¹

“By claiming that this book requires our attention, he [Fallows] is asserting that Israel’s existence and the right of its six million Jews to self-determination and self-defense is debatable. The answer to Fallows from those of us who were offended by NAF’s decision to embrace Blumenthal is to say that these notions are no more debatable than the positions of the Klan, apartheid advocates, or those of al-Qaeda. Blumenthal’s book belongs in the category of those things that are offensive, not because he is critical of an imperfect democracy but because his purpose is to advance the cause of its dissolution.”

Fallows argued at the end of his defense of the NAF event for *Goliath* that if Blumenthal is wrong, “his case should be addressed in specific rather than ruled out of respectable consideration.” That means in effect that Blumenthal’s critics are supposed to make a convincing case that Israel is not like Nazi Germany and that the Jewish state should perhaps be allowed to continue existing, even if some of its citizens, officials and politicians have views that are no better than those held by reactionaries in Europe or the US.

That is why the NAF event for Blumenthal was another milestone for the mainstreaming of anti-Semitism: it provided an unmistakable signal that it is now “salonfähig” – acceptable in polite company – to assert that Israel is like Nazi Germany and to insist that this is a reasonable, well-supported view that must be considered perfectly valid unless proven wrong. It is now also acceptable that a professor of political science and the author of a book that would soon be promoted by a prestigious think tank

¹¹⁰ NAF page for James Fallows, at: <http://newamerica.net/user/167>. Incidentally, Fallows’s piece defending the NAF event and Blumenthal’s book is, like his other recent writings, featured on the NAF website.

¹¹¹ Jonathan S. Tobin, A Disingenuous Defense of Hate Speech, December 9, 2013, at: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2013/12/09/a-disingenuous-defense-of-hate-speech-anti-zionism-max-blumenthal/>

can have an amicable discussion during a public event at a university about what should happen with Israel's Jews in view of the conclusion that the Jewish state is too fascist to "be allowed to survive." There are no consequences when the book's author explains that his overriding concern for the suffering of the Holy Land's "indigenous" people would require what amounts to a "Judens raus"-policy for those of Israel's Jews who are unwilling to "become indigenized." On the other hand, one should expect to be denounced as a "hater" and an opponent of free speech for speaking out against the decision of a prestigious think tank to promote a book on Israel whose author proudly displays on his Amazon page praise for his depiction of the Jewish state as an entity about to be consumed by a virulent "cancer" of "its own racist and colonialist making." After all, it is now perfectly acceptable to discuss how sick and sickening the Jewish state is and praise it as "fearless and honest" when this state is depicted as a rotting "corpse."

Since the NAF event for Blumenthal's *Goliath* was supposed to examine the question what the findings of the book mean for the prospects of peace in the Middle East, it seems worthwhile to note in conclusion that the legitimization of a book that equates Israel with Nazi Germany cannot fail to encourage those who have always opposed the existence of the "Zionist entity." It should go without saying that this affects also the standing of relatively "moderate" forces like the Palestinian Authority, which is opposed almost as bitterly as Israel by some of the outlets Blumenthal has praised as "courageous" enough to publish his writings.

While the mainstreaming of anti-Semitism will first and foremost affect Jews and the Jewish state, the Middle East could arguably do without further reinforcement of this very popular hatred. As Jeffrey Goldberg warned some two years ago in a column about the then still ostensibly hopeful "Arab Spring:"¹¹²

"across the Arab Middle East, Israel and the Jews are serving once again as universal boogeymen. Once dictators used anti-Semitism to divert their citizens' attention away from their own problems. Now expressions of the most ridiculous conspiracy theories seem to rise up organically. [...] The Arab Spring should liberate people not only from oppressive rulers, but also from self-destructive and delusional patterns of belief. Anti-Semitism, the 'socialism of fools,' not only threatens the Israel-Egypt peace treaty and dehumanizes Jews. It also undermines rationality. It prevents its adherents from seeing the world as it is -- and it will only be an impediment to actual change in the Arab world."

Perhaps the NAF will one day host an event about the implications of Arab and Muslim Jew-hatred for peace in the Middle East?

¹¹² Jeffrey Goldberg, Praise Arab Spring, Except for Anti-Semitism, November 29, 2011, at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-11-29/praise-arab-spring-except-for-anti-semitism-jeffrey-goldberg.html>

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